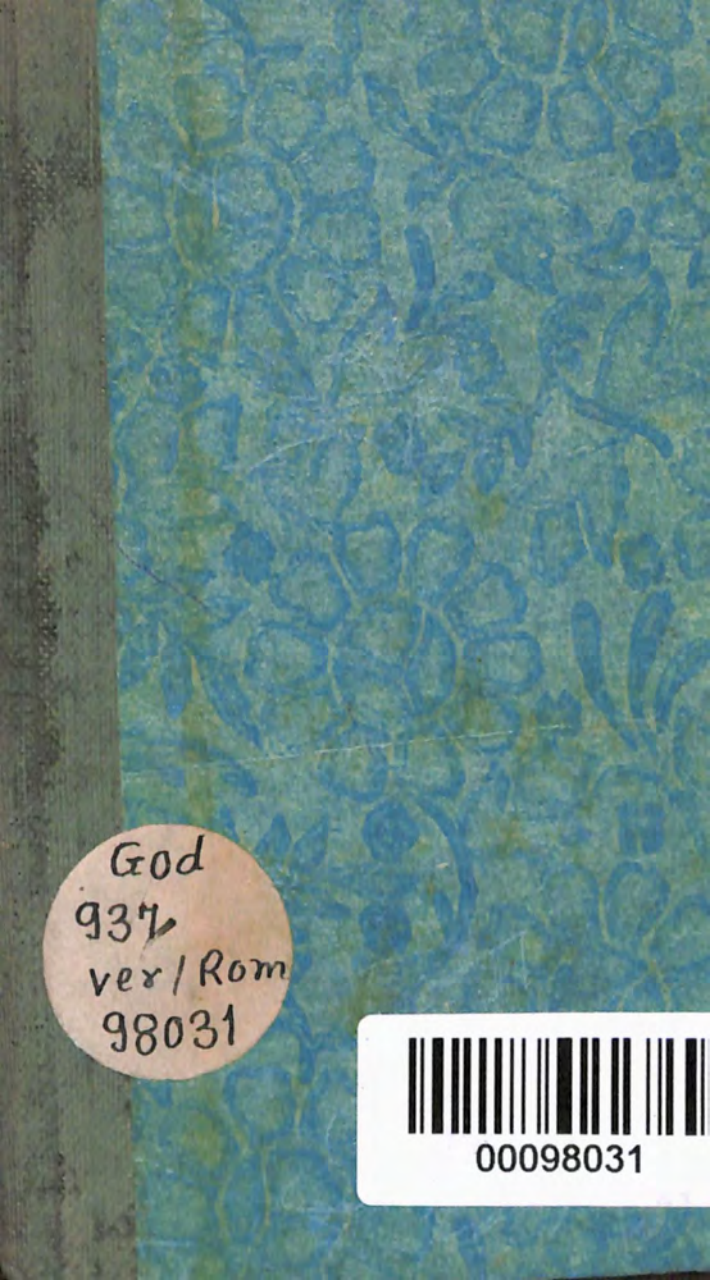
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THE ROMAN NIGHTS

AT

THE TOMB

OF

THE SCIPIOS.

98031

Translated from the Italian of Verri.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

BRANCH OFFICE ATLANTIC

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EDINBURGH;

NTED FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND Cº EDINBURGH;

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ROMAN NIGHTS of Count Verri have long enjoyed an unprecedented degree of popularity, not only throughout the States of Italy, but over the whole continent of Europe.

The discovery of the Sepulchral Grotto of the Scipios, which is made the groundwork of the story, took place in the summer of the year 1780; and the first volume of the "*Notte Romani*" was produced about twelve years afterwards; the first edition having appeared at Rome in the year 1792. This was followed by a second

edition, printed by Domenico Raggi of Rome, and dated the seventh year of the Republican era. Two editions were next produced at Milan, one printed by Zeno in 1798, and the other by Doves in 1800; and at Paris an edition was sent forth by G. C. Molini, in 1797. Trugoni of Genoa also published two editions, one in 1798, and the other in 1803.

All these, however, only contained the first three Nights; and the second volume, completing the Work, finally appeared in the eighth edition, of two volumes, which was not produced till the year 1804.

Previously to this, however, a French translation of the first volume had been printed at Lausanne, in Switzerland, in 1796, by the booksellers, Durand and Ravenel. And, since then, numerous editions have issued from the presses of Turin, Lucca, Leghorn, Florence, and Naples;

whilst the Work has been translated into German, Polish, and Spanish.

Hitherto, however, it has never appeared in an English dress. The Editor, therefore, conceived, that a work of imagination, which has been so favourably received abroad, might not prove altogether unacceptable to the British public; and if he should have succeeded in conveying, in his Translation, some faint idea of the beauties of the original, he flatters himself that he will not be thought to have altogether misemployed a few leisure hours.

London, 10*th May*, 1825.

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THE

ROMAN NIGHTS

AT THE

TOMB OF THE SCIPIOS.

NIGHT FIRST.

INTRODUCTION.

When I had unclasped the volumes of the ancients, and expatiated through their contents, I was struck with admiration, on perceiving the accordance that exists between the heroism of their actions and the magnificence of their style of writing. This, in time, became a deep and permanent feeling in my mind.

But amongst all the nations of antiquity, the Romans seem to me to have exalted themselves like giants above all the others, not only from the immensity of their undertakings, but from a cer-

tain heroic pride, and generous daring spirit. Upon the Romans, therefore, my mind became as it were habitually rivetted, and to so great a degree, that I seemed to contemplate them as actually present with me in the silent hours of my solitude.

Hence it has happened, that during my pensive walk by the banks of a stream, or the recesses of a forest, remote from all living objects, save the beasts of the desert, or the fowls of the air, my mind, absorbed in these meditations, has transported itself out of this frail body, and taken its flight into the most remote ages. And, indeed, to such a degree had this disposition grown upon me, that I had even conceived in my breast the most extraordinary and irresistible longing to behold and converse with some departed spirit of the ancient world, had it been possible to call one up from the abysses of the grave. I felt the same anxious desire which appears also to have haunted the illustrious Petrarch, making him, as it were, flit over all intervening ages, and, in some measure, to live with the people of antiquity. Hence those letters which he wrote to Cicero, to Seneca, to Livy, and to Varro, and which we find amongst

his other works. And is it not told of Pomponius Letus, that living in Rome, and deeply versed in the erudition of antiquity, he used to contemplate every relic of its primeval grandeur with such feelings of delight and admiration, that he has been at times seen to weep at the sight of some majestic ruin, remaining immoveable, and with his thoughts intensely fixed in ecstatic meditation?

For my part, bent on gratifying my longing wishes, I bade adieu to my native plains of Lombardy, and bent my way towards that august Rome, the perpetual object of my imaginings.

Whoever has tasted the delights of ancient literature, will bear witness to that palpitation which the heart experiences, when descending from the Apennine mountains, the road slopes down towards that ever celebrated city. With eyes straining to discover the tops of the seven hills, and a breast panting to waft itself amongst its precious monuments, every stone of each ancient building and tomb on the road-side becomes a material of learned conjecture, and of imaginary delight. At length, having entered upon the Via Flaminia, I called to mind its ancient magnifi-

cence, extending from Rimini to the city, and the name that it still bears of that illustrious Consul, who perished for his country in the battle fought against Hannibal near the Thrasymene Lake.

With my mind occupied in this intoxication of feeling, I entered the city gates, whose grandeur appeared to favour the grateful illusion, that I was now entering the immense and marble city of Augustus. But words are generally unequal to express our most delightful sensations; therefore, I shall not attempt to say what I felt, during the few first days, on beholding the sacred Tiber, the Egyptian obelisks, the temples still embrowned with the smoke of the sacrifices, the Amphitheatre of Flavius lying prostrate, like a dismembered giant, and those beauteous columns representing the costume of the military—the triumphal arches—the empty space of the forum—the mausoleums—the melancholy ruins of the circuses—the baths—and all those wonderful remains of Roman splendour which strike the mind of a stranger with such feelings of awe and amazement.

It was that season of the year when the au-

tumnal rains have refreshed the earth after the heats of summer. The atmosphere then appears to be purified, and the sky shines forth with more than sapphirine brightness. The plants recover their verdure, and the grass reviving, puts on all the freshness of spring. Now the chirruping of the grasshopper is hushed, and in its stead the song of the feathered choir is heard in the breeze, unconscious of the murderous snares which the sportsman is then preparing for their destruction.

A strange rumour was pervading the city, that the tombs of the Scipios, so long sought for in vain, had just been discovered. Wherefore, setting aside the contemplation of every other object, I immediately applied myself to that. The monuments of illustrious men are apt to fill the mind with a pleasing sort of sadness, much more grateful than any noisy amusements, to one constitutionally pensive and melancholy. The shadows of night, which now obscured the sky, were favourable to the calmness and repose which suited my undertaking. The shed of a poor peasant overhangs the tombs of the Scipios, which are concealed below in a subterraneous cavern, resem-

bling a den of wild beasts Through this, by an abrupt and narrow way, you are conducted to the tombs of that heroic race. Some were but just disencumbered from the ruins, while others remained covered with the earth. I there mingled with fragments of stones and clay. I beheld those illustrious bones glittering in the light of the torch which I bore in my hand to guide my footsteps. I turned myself around slowly on all sides, contemplating what havoc had been made by the pickaxe amongst spoils worthy of being encased in alabaster, but now become the sport of the vulgar multitude. But the learned strangers, who are wont to resort to this city, soon showed in what esteem they held these spoils. Many collected them, and carrying them away to the most remote countries, have enriched their cabinets with the relics of so dear and hallowed a race. Even illustrious females have descended there, (moved by their transcendant fame,) and scrambling with difficulty through these rugged caverns, have employed their delicate hands in collecting these sad memorials of the frailty of humanity. And thus I, too, beheld, with feelings of sorrow, lying at my feet, the bones of

those who had filled the world with their fame, contemplating, by turns, the fragments of those very skulls and fore arms which had planned or achieved such victories, but which were now, alas! cast down, trampled upon, and levelled with the dust.

Moreover, these tombs are venerable even from their very modesty, having been formed at a period when the Romans aspired more after virtue than magnificence: composed of a humble grey stone, rudely sculptured, on which are the names and deeds not even chiselled out, but only painted with a perishable colouring of red ochre, which, luckily, such a long lapse of ages had not effaced. These inscriptions tell in short and modest sentences the achievements of the heroic race, and are the words of the ancient language of Latium in all its simplicity. Behold, said I mentally, there still rises the monument of Caius Cestius, respecting whose deeds fame is, as it were, mute, since they have been in vain sought for in history. That lofty tomb now transmits to us with difficulty the bare name, unaccompanied with glory. How comes it then, it hath pleased thee, O barbarous fortune, to disturb these

glorious cinders, after having concealed them for so many ages under a heap of ruins? While my mind was thus immersed in these reflections, the night wind penetrating with a sudden gust through the entrance of the cave, rudely extinguished the torch which I held in my hand. I, although, by this accident, deprived as by sudden blindness of the enjoyment of these objects, yet was not sad, because, in proportion as I had lost the sight, so had I an increase of sentiment in the feeling of solitude, and deeper silence and repose. Now my mind plunged into the abyss of darkness, now my thoughts descended into that sorrowful kingdom of death, and according to their ancient habit, became desirous of conversing with the deceased. When, behold, I heard a doleful murmuring arise from beneath, composed of inarticulate sounds, with a slow sort of recitative singing. It resembled the wind as it howls through the valleys. At the same time, the earth trembled under my feet, and the midnight breeze whistled softly like the drowsy hum of bees.

The bones were disturbed in the tombs, and striking against the interior walls, sounded like

dry cinders. It seemed that the covers lifting themselves up a little, afterwards fell down upon the margins of the tombs in their former situation, at least in that state of darkness, I heard a sound which might have corresponded to such a cause.

At that moment, all my generous impulses yielded to the weakness of humanity, for I felt a cold chill run through my body, for which weakness I may be pardoned by those who consider that I was exposed to a trial almost too great for human strength to endure.

The breeze was hushed, and the earth remained firm. Suddenly there shone forth from the tombs a phosphorescent splendour, from which some human countenances began very slowly to arise. Then there appeared their arms, with which they held up the raised coverings; and afterwards, I saw the tombs thrown quite open, and filled with ghosts, which, standing up in them, showed only the upper halves of their persons. There were children and youths, and of these the heads only were apparent with part of the breast; other figures were of grown up men, and these showed themselves down to the haunches. The

matrons stood in modest attire, covered with veils, while some only discovered a small part of their countenance by lifting up the corner with their hand. There were some youths, whose heads were so covered with long hair, that it was not possible to discover their features. Of these, some divided them back with their hands from the middle of their face, others threw them behind their shoulders, while others discovered by their baldness, or by their silvery grey hairs, that they were far advanced in old age. The children who had been cut off in the flower of their age had a florid appearance, although, obscured by the sorrowful lethargy of death, because all these images had at first their eyelids cast down, and as if oppressed with eternal sleep; and afterwards lifting them up with difficulty, they gazed upon me with a slow motion of their eyeballs.

Thus they remained, as if not yet quite awake, when I saw, in the most remote cavity of these caves, a phosphorescent light shine forth, and at the same time a ghost approaching with a sorrowful deportment, clothed like one of the consular statues in a white robe. His benignant countenance breathed a bewitching dignity, and denot-

ed that period of life when old age, though fast approaching, has not yet arrived. His very aspect conciliated respect, and awakened wonder. At his appearance, all the others glided out of their tombs, and surrounded him with manifest signs of respect: they still murmured in a sound resembling groans, but which I cannot well express. Afterwards, they placed themselves around him in the attitudes of listeners: he stood in the midst of them in an authoritative manner, and I, in a submissive attitude, remained leaning my side against a tomb. Astonishment and awe not only made me mute, but even the effort of breathing appeared to me somewhat painful.

FIRST CONVERSATION.

Preliminary Discourse with the most Illustrious Spirit—his Portrait, and the occasion upon which the Spectres are assembled.

This Spectre began to deliver with a grave and authoritative solemnity an oration. The hearers stood around in various attitudes to listen, whilst I strained my organs of hearing, as if my whole existence had been affected by it.

At the commencement it seemed to me a strange tongue, and I was grieved at being unable to understand their words, but after a little the return of the same terminations, and of corresponding sounds, striking in a circle upon my ear, made me comprehend that it was the Latin idiom, although pronounced in a very different manner from that of the present day. So

that, after a while, to my great delight, I understood entire sentences. He was talking of the immensity of the heavens, in which are dispersed innumerable stars, and appeared to me to describe to them their greatness and distance. He shadowed out the marvellous consequence of the last and eternal change; and its effects upon the incomprehensible vastness of the universe. But he lamented that he could not find adequate words to express and exalt the creative wisdom, there being, indeed, no other mode more adopted to do honour to it, than an extreme and silent admiration. Then it appeared to me that he recounted some of his own celestial wanderings amidst the spheres, as if he had diligently contemplated the structure of so august an edifice; going on next to discourse about the intellectual essence, and how comparatively vile seemed all matter, so that he considered his mortal life, when his genius was clothed in clay, as a dream, and several times I understood him to say, that he considered all human doctrine as nothing but ignorance. His discourse proceeded like a majestic river with a sorrowful course, upon which the consonance and

magnificence of his diction shed dignity and splendour.

He proceeded, thereafter, to discourse of virtue in sublime language, during which argument the Spectre's countenance appeared to me to expand, as if inspired with the most lofty feelings. Then his voice became by turns either depressed or exalted, slow or quickened, placid or threatening, in correspondence with the variety of his sentiments. He hinted that human virtues are only very imperfect imitations compared with eternal, that, like gems set in clods of clay, they shine with a false splendour, or are often either confounded with their opposite vices, or constrained to bend to the varying course of opinions. But that there is only one sole and perfect virtue, the eternal, immutable, invincible, divine. He next exhorted these sorrowing souls not to bewail their lost mortal life, nor to lament at seeing there the spoils of those frail tenements which once clothed them, but arising to the contemplation of the firmament and of the divine magnificence, that they should endure with dignity the immutable decree which had set them free to immortal life.

While he thus reasoned, all the spectres listened in silent wonder. Those who bore a martial and manly aspect, showed themselves satisfied with these philosophical arguments; but those of the women and children, on the contrary, displayed sorrow, and their sighs testified that they still regretted their terrestrial life. But the insurmountable barrier held them in. The wretched infants extended their arms to their mothers, who again, with human affection, pressed them closely to their breasts, and seemed in mute anguish to look up for the light of heaven. For my part, struck with wonder and pity, I could scarcely distinguish whether I was yet living and an inhabitant of the earth, so much was I bewitched by these images and words. I now heard, with inexpressible delight, the sound of that ancient language, and now no longer doubted that this must be the soul of some illustrious Roman orator.

But when he left off speaking, the listening ghosts again withdrew to their tombs, and he only remained who had just addressed them. I, therefore, came forward into the centre, and, inspired with more than wonted confidence by his astounding

eloquence, turning myself to the Spectre, I thus addressed him, in fluent terms, in the Latin tongue: "All hail, whoever thou art, who thus, in such sublimely eloquent language, hast discoursed on subjects so far above my weak mental comprehension. For though I am not altogether equal to understand fully thy wonderful propositions, yet from them I can understand, that, when thou didst belong to this world, thou wert a most divine and eloquent speaker. I am sensible that this incumbrance of mortal flesh depresses my thoughts, whilst thine, on the contrary, set free from such a burthen, exalt themselves like celestial flames towards their native heaven. But if human prayers still possess any power over thee, I conjure thee to descend in some measure from the sublimity of thy speculations, and converse with me in a style suited to my mortal weakness. Thy works resound with celestial harmony, and shine with all the splendour of eternal wisdom. Mine, on the contrary, appear to be like the puerilities of a child compared with thine; but do thou deign to humble thyself to my imbecillity, so that I may at length boast that I have held converse with an incorporeal being. But, alas! if

the rigorous laws of death do not forbid such a request, reveal to me if thou also wert once a mortal like ourself, as it appears to me thou wert; —where or when thou beheldest the light of our sun—by what name thou wert called, which, indeed, I presume to think, must have descended to us by fame renowned and eternal."

I was silent, when he fixed upon me his bright eyes with a look of benignity, then smiled, but, without renouncing the dignity of his look, and appeared to show a disposition to comply with my request. He then asked me, "Wherefore standest you here watching amidst the silence of death, when thy fellow mortals are placidly enjoying in sleep the oblivion of their cares?"

I meekly answered, "Lo, I am come hither amongst these illustrious relics, and the sentiments of pity and admiration, which I feel for the virtues of the deceased, have detained me in this spot. Moreover, I have long had my mind continually fixed upon them, and the admiration I feel for their greatness prevents the intrusion of all other thoughts."

On hearing these my words, his countenance assumed a greater look of serenity; and, after re-

garding me some time with benevolence, he thus addressed me:—"If, then, it were granted to thee to converse with any Roman, to whom wouldst thou give the preference?" I, with the sentiment long settled in my mind, suddenly answered, "To Marcus Tullius Cicero."

To this answer, thus joyfully expressed by me, the Spectre, as if moved by paternal benignity, replied gladly, yet modestly: "I am he'!—I am the weak man of Arpinas whom thou seekest." How shall I express the flood of delight which poured upon my breast when I heard that wonderful answer?—I remained silent and perplexed, as at an unexpected piece of tidings, then rushed towards the Spectre, and several times attempted with my arms to embrace him with reverential affection, but my arms returned empty to my breast. Nevertheless, he appeared pleased with my sincere endeavours. At length, when the first emotions of delight had subsided, I contemplated with attention that countenance in which were hoarded all the treasures of learning, and those eloquent lips which have since remained unequalled, and that hand which had grasped that stylet of gold, and that

breast which had contained a heart so mighty for his country, and so tender for his friends. Much it grieves me, however, that I am constrained by truth to deprive of a pleasing mistake, those who firmly believe that they possess, either on gems or in busts, the resemblance of so great a man, because not one of them bore resemblance to him. And never before have I regretted that I was ignorant of the painter's or the sculptor's skill, so that I might have traced a resemblance, so much as upon this incredible occasion, by which I only, of all living beings, might have been able to gratify the universal wish. But, although unable in either of these modes, I will at least endeavour to supply it in my humble style, by shadowing out in words this illustrious image. The markings of ripe manhood were strongly expressed upon his countenance, which was somewhat emaciated like that of a man, who, being indifferent as to physical enjoyments, only delighted in intellectual gratifications. A complacent gravity denoted the long-extended contemplations of his mind; but a pleasing modesty, at the same time, appeared to hide the extent of his learning; locks of hair, somewhat thin and hoary,

appeared artlessly arranged round his head; the forehead, wrinkled between the eyebrows, indicated how frequently it had been contracted during the habits of profound thought; the eyes were large and bright, and slow in their motion, with a certain extraordinary sort of lustre, which, possibly, might not have been present during life; above these were extended large arched eyebrows, rather shaggy; the cheeks were somewhat pallid, the mouth rather large, the lips turgid, especially the lower one, the chin well proportioned; he frequently rested himself, when he was silent, upon his left hand—and, indeed, this confirmed what the faithful Plutarch has written of him, in his Lives of Illustrious Men, where this his usual attitude has not been omitted. In stature he surpassed the middle size, his dress was a white robe;—in discoursing he modulated his voice, and adjusted his person in various elegant attitudes suited to his words: and by that, too, I perceived how true it was, that he arranged his declamations according to the manner of the tragic actors, because, either with strong or moderate inflexions of voice, or a humble or heroic manner, he conformed himself to

the several sentiments he expressed; which beautiful harmony produced in the mind so sweet a fascination, that it was induced willingly to yield consent to every conclusion. O happy! thrice happy, my studies, which have enabled me thus to surmount, to overcome, the lapse of time—and that thus I should have seen, heard, and conversed with this incomparable orator.

I remained still immoveable, as if overcome by a delicious enchantment, contemplating this image, while he, as if to permit me to satisfy my longing eyes, kept a mournful silence. But, in a short time, there again awakened in me the wish to converse with him, and I thus began:—"I would not, oh, mighty Genius! wish to disturb thy eloquence, and this tranquillity granted to you, ye illustrious shades, in these abysses of death. But thy silence, although breathing dignity, fills my mind with sadness; and this, thy awful presence, makes my heart palpitate. Inclined, as thou ever wert, during thy lifetime, to defend the innocent with thy illustrious eloquence, constant towards thy friends, useful and faithful to thy country, full of sweet benevolence to thy relations, gentle in thy manners, lofty in

thy doctrines, I am permitted to hope, that thou still preservest those virtues, which, belonging essentially to the mind, do not decay with the body. Ah! speak, then, and grant to me, that I may drink from the fountain of the clear waters of thy eloquence!"

To which request, he, appearing somewhat pleased, thus answered:—"With much more facility than I could have believed it possible, O húmane and magnanimous man! thou speakest to me in our language. Certainly, it is a most unexpected event, that the overwhelming torrent of twenty ages has not swept away that idiom. Thy generous desire moves me,—that thou shouldst wish to converse with those spectres which are more usually wont to trouble human reason, and which, amongst all nations, have been always the cause of infinite wonder. Thy thoughts, therefore, must of necessity be exalted, since they are sufficient to overcome the strongest infirmity of human nature, that of fear. But, how art thou aware of the disposition which I possessed, to which thou hast granted such hearty praise, that even I, in listening to it, experience a delightful transport? And wherefore dost thou prefer me

to all others—me, who reckon myself very inferior to many?"

Then I, much more animated by these courteous questions, somewhat humbly replied: "To so great a mind as thine is, the virtue of modesty could not be awanting; and, do we not read continually the proofs of it in thy golden volumes? Then, when thou enterest upon the discussions of philosophy, in as much as thou art splendid in thy eloquence, and inexhaustible in thy doctrines, so art thou moderate in thy judgments, and leavest the weighing of thy opinions to be submitted to the judgment of thy readers. And this hesitation in affirming appears to have been usual with many, amidst thy illustrious predecessors, beginning with Socrates, who confounded the pride of vain doctrines by means of perpetual interrogations. But that, indeed, is now rare in the world; because at present, writers, with the most impetuous eloquence, proclaim opinions wonderful, chiefly for their audacity."

Tullius, upon hearing this, indignantly broke forth:—"Wretched is all thy wisdom, since it is merely a dying ember, in comparison with the ocean of splendour, through which is extended

the eternal wisdom. He amongst you who fills the world with his doctrines—he who amongst you appears to exalt himself to heaven by the astonishing sublimity of his genius, is (to us spirits set free from the shackles of the flesh) but as one of the brutal spirits of the most stupid of animals; and we ourselves, although unfettered with humanity, are but vile intellects in comparison with the Most High. Still we feel a degree of compassion at the pride which induces any of you to trust in his vain wisdom."

He was then silent, permitting me to finish the discourse he had interrupted. Then I, in order to prove to him still more how much his course of studies were known to me, began to recite some of the commencements of his philosophical writings, and then some of the perorations of his harangues, and thereafter, according as my memory served me, various periods and sentences from his different works. It was then wonderful to behold how, at first, the Spectre showed an extraordinary commotion upon hearing me, and then the tears began to trickle down upon his toga. I, struck with pity, ceased from the recital, fearing that the delicacy of his ear

was hurt by my barbarous pronunciation of his works. But he subjoined: "Whilst I was amongst you, I obtained no small fame from my eloquence, and in its artifices, exerted all that talent which nature had bestowed upon me. Several times have I seen the assembly of the people, at the sound of my voice, moved to and fro like billows before the wind—the grave judges pour forth tears—the squalid countenances of the accused become joyful, and those of their accusers sorrowful—the audacious awed, and the powerful contemners of justice grow timid. But thou beholdest in me a still more wonderful effect from thy artless discourse, because thou hast again reduced me to a state of human weakness. For, behold, thy words have plunged me into a state of feeling unusual in this abyss of death. Certainly thou couldst not have saluted my ears with any sounds more grateful to me than those of my own writings, pronounced, in this place, after such a lapse of ages, and with so ready a recollection. And I, in order that I might prolong so agreeable an effect, proceeded to narrate those circumstances of his death which fame has transmitted to us, and which still awaken commiseration in

every one who hears them." But, at their recital, the Spectre was moved, and fixed his eyes sorrowfully upon me. I then checked myself, and he, sighing, thus commenced: "Thou, although with the most benevolent mind, announcest to me the most painful news, for I had no longer any recollection of these outrages, which, although they could only have offended my poor remains, are yet the effects of a rage so abominable, that even the recital of them distresses me.

"The injury is now ancient, indignation is useless, vengeance is tardy, and yet I feel, through that body that I possessed, while in life, that human cares are awakened."

I remained silent, and, with wonder, heard these painful words, and then replied: "Unlooked for is that which thou now tellest me! Lo, I, still living, am stimulated by the most anxious desire to converse with thee; numberless other men have felt the same anxiety, and scarcely are they restrained from satisfying it, even by the terrors of death itself. There daily must have descended to thee messengers of our proceedings, and I do not understand how you were not anxious to hear them, infinite being the reasons and induce-

ments which ought to stimulate thee to wish it." He answered: "Different, more than thou canst believe, are the customs in eternity from those of this life. Not one of our qualities is similar or proportionate to that upon earth. For you time, space, motion, are the foundation and the rules of all science, whilst for us, they are repugnant qualities, because infinity hath no measure, no extension; and change of place does not belong to a substance which neither has, nor can occupy, any space. Even amidst thy darkness, then thou mayst perceive how impossible it is for us to converse upon this subject; yet, shadowing out with human words the secrets of a second life, know that we are engulfed in the ocean of time, in the immensity of which, not individuals merely, but entire generations, are but as a leaf, that, driven by the wind, floats to and fro on the billows. And, as amidst the vast expanse of the ocean, it would be an event almost impossible for any shipwrecked sufferers to meet together by swimming; think how much more so it must be in this ocean, bottomless and boundless, in which the mind becomes lost, and wearied, and dispirited;

and is thus warned, not vainly to wander beyond the confines of human intellect."

I listened with incredible anxiety to these mysterious words, and although I was filled with reverence for them, yet, as I had only just before seen the Spectres assemble together and converse with Tullius, it appeared to me to be in direct contradiction to the difficulty which he had asserted existed in their meeting in the world of spirits. I, therefore, modestly explained to him my perplexity, and he calmly answered: "It is as certainly praiseworthy to yield consent to an evident truth, as it is proper to dissent from the reverse, because both are signs of a candid mind; but I am prepared to remove from your mind all these troublesome doubtings. We were dispersed and divided at immense intervals in the sea of time, nor had any amongst us yet met in that eternal silence, when we heard the sound, as if of a trumpet, which called us together to this part of the earth; and we, following it as a guide, like sailors who behold the light of a watch-tower in a stormy night, are here come together in an innumerable multitude, and have thus met. We saw suddenly, that

these were the tombs of those who, by their wonderful achievements, were the principal founders of Roman greatness. In them always the country placed its trust during dangers, and they were its sureties during prosperity. The very name of that race was heard with trembling by the most haughty nations. But, that their illustrious bones should be broken by the hoes of rustics, hath created amongst us a marvellous tumult, and here we are drawn together in unexpected congress. I, however, conversed with the first whom I met here, whom I discovered to be the souls of the vulgar multitude; and, therefore, following the customs which I observed in my lifetime, I harangued them, as if met in our assembly, in an authoritative tone."

CONFERENCE THE SECOND.

Brutus and Cæsar dispute about the Slaying of the Tyrant.

WHILST Tullius entertained me in this mode with mild discourse, the caves resounded with a variety of subdued sounds all around, and then, from the earth beneath, and from winding paths, and from the tombs, arose anew the ghosts, visible from their own inherent splendour, like that of fluttering fire-flies. They had an appearance considerably resembling those whom I had already seen, yet were in some degree different; for a few were clothed in long ample robes, others in a close jacket; some armed, others arrayed in the robes of matrons, so that I could not doubt that these were ghosts of some of the most illustrious of the Romans. How wonderful were their vari-

ous countenances, and how great the dignity of their figures! Upon their appearance, I, although filled with an insatiable desire to contemplate them, yet struck by the majesty of their looks, and rather withdrawing myself, said to Tullius: "Support my constancy, for my human nature now can hardly sustain so unexpected a prodigy." He, extending to me a hand of protection, exclaimed—"Remain," and then cast upon me a benevolent look. Then, turning himself round to the assembling shades with a graceful, yet noble dignity of manner, he waved his right hand in token of silence. Immediately the ghosts, assembling around him, remained silently attentive, and I stood near him scarcely venturing to breathe. The spectres looked upon each other reciprocally with anxiety, and Tullius, in like manner, contemplated the multitude. Then sighing, he exclaimed—"O revered amongst us, and justly denominated the last of the Romans, art not thou Marcus Brutus?" He, extending his right arm, answered, "Here am I, still ready to put to death tyrants." Then the friendly shades mixed together in vain embraces, trying to satisfy, according to human usage, their ancient feelings of

good-will. But while they were enjoying this delightful rencontre, there rushed with fury from the crowd an indignant spectre, who, approaching these two friends, thus broke forth—"Why these thy demonstrations of joy, when, along with Cæsar, fell our native country, from which was torn away a gentle moderator of its discords?" Brutus turned round his stern looks upon this shade, and angrily exclaimed, "O vile Marc Antony, still are thy words befitting thy depraved morals; but although, in thy lifetime, thou wert a reviler of all virtue, yet suffer us now at least, without troubling us with thy derision, once more to greet each other, separated as we have been for so many ages, although, by mutual regard, for ever united."

Whilst Brutus was thus speaking, another spectre approached hastily, as if suffering under some violent agitation. The multitude permitted him to enter into the midst, as the rabble are wont to give way upon the appearance of a person of noble rank. The two spectres who had begun to converse became silent, and regarded him sedately. He came forward in silence, and fixed upon them his fiery eyes. This silence

was like the threatening calm that precedes the devastations of a whirlwind. Then he exclaimed, —"Oh perfidious Brutus! with what exclamations of ill-timed joy dost thou come here to trouble the silence of death? Although the stream of ages ought for ever to have overwhelmed the memory of thy misdeed and of my lamentable death, in thee still rages perpetual anger, as if it were even now the fatal Ides of March!—Wherefore has not my blood, poured forth from so many and so wide wounds, not yet satiated thy barbarous thirst? Generally even the most deep-rooted hatreds are wont to be moderated by the death of the victim, and even to be altogether extinguished by the sympathy of a common suffering." So saying, he fixed upon Brutus his indignant eye-balls. He remained silent; his silence showed how deeply he was plunged in reverie, for intrepid and severe, but without wrath or derision, with all the magnanimity of stoicism, he showed himself still unconquered by fortune. Marc Antony then approached in a courteous manner to that angry shade, who calmed himself, and made signs of acknowledging his ancient friendship. I knew that this Spectre was the

Dictator Cæsar, as well from his discourse as from his resemblance handed down to us on coins and various images. I remained, however, an attentive hearer of so great a debate, when Tullius, interposing himself between Brutus and the Dictator, with placid voice, said,—"Compose thyself, oh mighty shade! for Brutus hates not thee but thy tyranny. In thy lifetime thou wert an admirer of virtue, even in thy enemies, and beheld it with joy, and bestowed on it praise during the most atrocious civil discords. Well dost thou know what stoic rigour there was in his habits—what integrity in his life—what innocence in his desires—and if I may not say that *true* virtue raised his arm against thee, suffer me at least to say, that he was deceived by no common *resemblance* of virtue."

The Dictator seemingly appeased, listened to these his exhortations, and calmly replied,—"And what cannot that triumphant pleading effect, with which I was of yore so wonderfully overcome during the accusation of Ligurius? Did not those writings, in which were contained the most irrefragable proofs of his guilt, drop from my hands, and I acquitted him, not because my rea-

son was convinced, but because my feelings were moved."—"That," rejoined Tullius, "was still more the effect of thy natural clemency, than of my powers of eloquence." Cæsar quickly added, "It was the effect of both, (if you would reconcile both our opinions,) and from which we afterwards reaped but unworthy fruit, for I afterwards observed, among my assassins, that very Ligurius. Think, then, what sort of man you preserved by your pleading, and I by my clemency."

Whilst they thus conversed, Brutus remained sternly silent. When Tullius, turning round, courteously stretched out to him his hand, saying, "Since you accomplished your daring enterprise, you ought to be satisfied at having sacrificed to your country such an illustrious victim. To keep up here that old rancour, now that time has removed all proper motives, would betray rather a degree of obstinacy than any generous constancy. I therefore beseech you, by the authority of that friendship which I possessed during life, and by that learned intercourse which we maintained during our civil occupations, to show thyself now as magnanimous as formerly. If, from exalted

motives, the weakly and emaciated body of the Dictator was pierced by your steel, now, at least, show yourself friendly to this his great soul, which was by you driven into perpetual exile." At these words, I observed the frigidly severe features of Brutus relax. The Dictator, with his usual proneness to clemency, then offered to grasp, in friendship, that right hand which had given him his death-blow. Now was displayed on his countenance, that the pleasure he felt at again seeing so magnanimous a citizen, had extinguished in him all desire of vengeance: and, therefore, their souls being now removed from all angry human feelings, with a face somewhat pale and emaciated as he had during life, Brutus thus addressed him—"O, Cæsar, I plunged my steel into thy breast, not from any hatred to thee, but from pity for Rome. But here, after twenty centuries, which have consumed alike our bodily frames and human motives, we may arrive at a fair and impartial judgment on our past actions. Tell me, then, if it is not thy candid opinion, that even thy most fortunate days were fatal to the republic?" Then Tullius exclaimed, "O, free and liberal contention, alone

suitable to two such intellects!" Marc Antony, however, would have opposed himself to Brutus, according to that affection that he bore for Cæsar during his lifetime, had not the latter made a sign to him to refrain, and turning himself to Brutus, put this question, "After that I had been laid low by thy dagger, did liberty then arise?" "No," replied the other, sighing, "it remained a prey to that Antony who stands there, and to Octavian, thy nephew, who renewed the proscriptions of Sylla, and put to death the most worthy citizens." Then said Cæsar, "And to thee, Brutus, what happened? What reward did thy country bestow for that cruelty which thou pretendedst was useful to her?" He replied, "The reward of virtue is the praise of the wise, and perpetual renown: but, if these guerdons are withheld by the cruelty of fortune, there always remains the greater and more certain, the complacency which springs from the consciousness of a great and honourable design."—"But, however," said Cæsar earnestly, "what was thy latter end?" Brutus sorrowfully replied, "I, also overwhelmed with the fate of Rome, turned against myself that dagger which had

proved unavailing for her salvation, I fell! but in company with my country; nor did I suffer the disgrace of being a witness to her slavery."—"Behold, then," rejoined the Dictator, "it is now manifest that thy enterprise was useless in effect; let us now examine whether it was just in its motives. Say, then, what these were." Then Brutus, "A wonderful genius, but incapable of rest—a mighty heart, but immoderate in its wishes—a generous disposition, but repugnant to all civil equality—a mind always impelled as if by some feverish impulse towards extraordinary actions—these were in thee the causes of thy splendid vices, and deceitful accomplishments. Hence, there never existed a citizen more pernicious than thou wert, in a state whose liberty was fixed. Thy virtues never stood in the way of thine ambitious career, but when thou hadst attained thine end, thou leftst alive those who had survived destruction with a pompous clemency. Nor do I wish to deal only in general assertions, but to prove it, let us descend to particulars. For which cause, setting aside the disgraceful dissoluteness of thy private habits, I purpose to display thy public vices. Recollect, therefore, how

being then youthful in age, but mature in depravity, thou wert unable to set out for the proconsulship of Iberia, from a disgraceful reason, because, having dissipated thy property in the Comitia to obtain it, thy creditors detained thee, nor couldst thou have gone away, had not the rich Crassus become security for thee. Next, when thou hadst attained to the consulship, by means of new largesses, thou wert more, even more, seditious than a Tribune of the people, by adulating whom, thou preparedst a way to raise thyself to a lofty eminence during civil commotions. The Senate were troubled on seeing proposed anew, that ever ready bait for exciting Plebeian tumults, the Agrarian law—the better class trembled, and particularly the best of men, the excellent Cato; thy colleague, Bibulus, too, opposed himself to thy pernicious designs. Oh deplorable Comitia, through which thy satellites, carrying daggers under their cloaks, were dispersed in order to terrify the good. Scarcely had Bibulus begun to harangue from the rostrum against the law proposed by thee, when the populace, at thy instigation, threw mud at the venerable head of the Consul, broke the fasces of

his lictors, and dragged Bibulus himself across the steps of the Temple of Castor, wounded and covered with blood all those who escorted him, and, amongst them, the two Tribunes, although considered of an inviolable dignity.

"Two several times did the magnanimous Cato oppose himself to the tempestuous assemblage with his voice till then venerated, and as often did thy blood-hounds lay violent hands on him, and drag him from the rostrum. In this manner didst thou, having in a manner laid aside all feelings of shame, disturb openly the republic. Then thy betrayed and oppressed colleague was obliged to shut himself up for a great part of his consulship within the walls of his own house, abandoning to thee that liberty of thy country, now expiring within thy arms. When afterwards having obtained the province of the Gauls, thou wert absent from us for ten years; thou preparest thyself to become more fatal to us on thy return, for these wars were a sort of glorious arena, in which you learnt the art of afterwards subduing thy own countrymen the Romans. Call to mind the fatal day on which thou crossedst the Rubicon, and enteredst thy native country,

mute and trembling at the splendour of thy arms. Wretched triumphs, and fatal discipline of those thy legions, bringing back to Rome fallacious glory, but real slavery. From that time forwards, despising our liberty, didst thou not daily repeat that shameful saying, that the name of a republic was absurd; that Sylla had been imprudent in laying down the Dictatorship, and that the Romans ought now to consider thy words as their law? And then, behold, with debased minds and hypocritical countenances, did not the greater part of the populace flock around thee, their new tyrant, and with despicable emulation strive to outdo each other in baseness? Then began to be scattered amongst the multitude those deceitful sayings which acclaimed thee king; shortly afterwards, thy two statues appeared crowned with a royal diadem; and lastly, that Marc Antony, then Consul, during the feast of the Lupercalia, came forward naked, and conspicuous in folly, whilst thou satest upon a throne of gold, and offered thee a royal crown. He prostrated himself like a supplicant at thy feet, beseeching thee to accept it, and thou, in thy turn, representing, like a tragic actor,

the refusal of it, left it no longer doubtful, which of you would be the most expert one in feigning, and the other in flattering. But first the groans of the multitude, and then their threating silence at this scandalous scene, showed clearly, that the populace had not yet been so thoroughly depraved, that they could conceal their ancient detestation at the royal office. But, as if our own sagacity had not been sufficient, like men oppressed by fortune, to make us penetrate the heart of a tyrant, thou thyself wert solicitous to make it still better known. For L. Cotta, the keeper of the Sybilline books, next propagated a report, that, according to these oracles, the Parthians could only be conquered by a king, and that it would be necessary to give thee that title, in order that thou mightst overcome them. Finally, servile cowardice prevailed to that excessive degree, that some one in the senate proposed a decree, that free permission might be granted thee in our general slavery, that thou mightst possess thyself of any female according to thy pleasure. If these, then, were not proofs of tyrannical sway, what more ought we to expect, since not only our own lives, but those of our children, and the chastity

of our wives and daughters, were become the daily gift of thy clemency? What more must I add? I beheld the fields of Pharsalia covered with the mutilated members of Romans, the head of Pompey cut off by traitors, all the most worthy men driven into exile, the country covered with mourning. Thy throne was erected upon our very skeletons, and thy regal robes dyed, not in purple, but in the blood of Romans. Then, indeed, thy infamous flatterers called thee Jove—Julius—the Invincible God—temples arose—altars—shrines—images—priests offered libations, and even burnt-offerings to that thy divinity, which I at once annihilated by means of a dagger."

CONFERENCE THE THIRD.

Cæsar exposes the Corruptions of the Republic, and asserts the necessity of a Monarchy.

Brutus was silent, and Cæsar turning himself towards the multitude, commenced:—"If I, Julius Cæsar, through my liberality, through my triumphs, and through my greatness of soul, have acquired any grace or esteem from you, I beseech ye to grant me in death this only reward, that you would now listen to me with complacency. If I were indeed to blame, already hath the steel of this man and his followers consummated your wrath with dreadful vengeance. At least then, let this favour be accorded to me, which is not even denied to malefactors, that I may protect my own cause with becoming language."

Then, addressing himself to Brutus, he pro-

ceeded in this manner:—"Now, that thou hast exposed the reasons for which thou cut me off from Rome, as its most fatal incumbrance, I ought to be permitted to expose the reasons which induced me to exalt myself above civil equality, of which this was the first, and indeed the leading cause, that in those days, whoever possessed any particular degree of virtue, was obliged to make choice of the one of two conditions, either empire or slavery. Besides, the multitude could not entertain a more reasonable wish, than that of taking refuge from universal overwhelming anarchy, under the government of one supreme moderator. Injuries, indeed, neither recent nor small, but infinite, inveterate, incurable and destructive, had not only rendered true liberty insecure, but even overthrown and destroyed it a long time before we had come into existence.

"And, in order that the truth of these general assertions may be made manifest, call to mind, that, almost a century before I fell under thy weapon, the insolence of Curiatius the Tribune had mounted to that pitch, that he had threatened the two Consuls, Scipio Nasica and Decius Junius Brutus, with imprisonment; such was the

fury, and unrestrained licentiousness of the people. Scarcely had a lustre of five years elapsed after this wretched consulship, when there commenced, not discords, but civil wars, during the tribunate of the Gracchi; and, as if their violent deaths had not been a sufficient proof of the extreme and incurable depravity then prevailing, there came soon after to Rome a king of a barbarous people, to make it manifest to the whole world. I speak of Jugartha, the usurper of the throne of Numidia, after the fraudulent murder of his two brothers. Our Consuls, Scaurus and Calpurnius, sent to avenge that atrocious deed, returned overcome by his treasures. Called upon afterwards to defend here his cause before a Senate, already bribed by his usurped riches, he came cheerful and confident, with a serene countenance, well aware of the vileness of his judges. Whilst the accusations of the murders of his relations were still pending, did not he commit a new one openly in this city, on the person of Massiva, another of his brothers, who had in vain sought refuge here from his treacherous dagger? Nor did the Senate pronounce any other punishment against this, and his other

innumerable atrocities, except that he should quit Rome; of which palpable connivance the said guilty monarch displayed so little wonder, that, at his departure, he turned himself round to these walls, and uttered that shameful, but well-merited sarcasm,—VENAL CITY! IF A PURCHASER COULD BUT BE FOUND, SPEEDY WOULD BE THY FALL!!! So that, if by chance any citizen remained free from the universal corruption of manners, he became the object of common insult. Thus Quintus Metellus Numidicus, then Censor, whose breast was still warm with ancient virtue, was so much detested, that the Tribune, Caius Assinius, seized upon him in the streets in mid-day, and dragged him to the Tarpeian Rock in order to throw him over it, and was only prevented from putting his horrid purpose in execution by some person running after him. Nevertheless, during this tumult, the Censor was so roughly handled, that the blood gushed from his ears. And so hateful was virtue become, that the Romans could not even bear its aspect; so that every opportunity was seized upon to outrage it, by that most audacious of all the men who have ever existed, or, perhaps, ever will

exist; I mean the Tribune, Saturninus. Neither eloquence nor dignity any longer prevailed in the Comitia, but only stones, mud, and wounds. In that assemblage of peace and free counsel, the Tribune, the ferocious leader of the stupid multitude, rose up against Metellus, who retired to the Capitol; but, having been pursued thither, it was even deliberated to kill him on the self-same spot, where, only a little while before, he had been led in triumph: nor was that most precious life rescued by the Patricians from the hands of the rabble without the effusion of rivers of civil blood;—and, after suffering daily insults, was not Metellus finally obliged to withdraw himself from Rome, and take refuge in the island of Rhodes, there to await the return of happier days?

"Saturninus, then exulting in all the intoxication of his sanguinary enterprises, having finished his tribuneship, aspired to it a second time; but when he saw himself excluded by the suffrages, he was moved in the Comitia (together with his villanous followers) to commit the most dreadful excesses. There, in your sight, O, ye tame and weak-hearted Romans! he murdered Aulus Nonnius,

the last of the ten Tribunes then chosen, and proclaimed himself in his stead. And did not your tameness merit these outrages? Saturninus not only remained in that dignity, but exercised it with a fury suited to the atrocious manner in which he had obtained it. What was then secure in Rome except iniquity?—what magistrate was sacred?—what law inviolate?—what virtue not contemned? Alas! that I should narrate such odious events, still lamentable, although overwhelmed in the lapses of time, and absolutely worthless when opposed to the meditations of eternity. But the sight of this multitude of our progenitors, contemporaries, and descendants, assembled together after so many centuries, recalls the solicitudes of mortal life. Perhaps there may be now amongst ye some one who was a witness to the unheard outrage committed by Saturninus on Glaucias the Prætor. While he sat in the Comitia, that wretch, complaining that his presence was disagreeable to him, drove him away, and broke into pieces his curule chair.

"But why should we marvel? Did not the dreadful ferocity of that tribune arrive at that pitch, that he murdered, by the hands of his as-

sassins, in the face of the people, and of the Senate, Memmius, just as he was in the act of obtaining a majority of votes for the consulship? Then, even ye who had hitherto been the cold-hearted spectators of so many atrocities, that day aroused yourselves on a sudden from your lethargy, and with all the fury of the vulgar, put to death this Saturninus, tearing him to pieces, and carrying his head in triumph through the city; contemptible in his death, as he had been insolent during his lifetime.

"Thus murders were avenged by murders; thus crimes were employed to correct crimes, and the remedies only became a confirmation of the evils.

"But the face of the heavens having become more cheerful, since it was no longer obscured by the atrocities of that Tribune, there re-appeared, like a ray of the sun amongst the tempestuous clouds, the illustrious Metellus, the same year in which I was born, and, lo, I, in the beginning of my life, was a spectator of civil discords. On the one side, the Tribune Drusus excited the licentiousness of the vulgar; while, on the other, the Senator Cepio supported the tyranny of the

higher orders; which struggles, though severe and dangerous in their results, were in their original causes trifling and puerile. Some now present will perhaps remember that these two persons were, when yet young men, attached together by a disgraceful sort of friendship, having made a mutual exchange of their wives; but afterwards, at an auction of some household goods, a competition arose between them respecting the purchase of an ass, which they both coveted; and from that occasion their hatred increased, till, bursting out in the Comitia, the wretched city was at length drawn with fatal violence into their quarrels; during which, the Tribune went so far as to threaten to throw his rival from the top of the Tarpeian Rock; a spot no longer the coveted goal of triumph, but the place of punishment for such as opposed themselves to the wrath of the populace. But if this was only a menace to an illustrious Senator, Philippus, then Consul, suffered the effects of the audacity of Drusus; for this authority being troublesome to him, he dragged him to prison, as if to rescue him from the fury of the people, and in doing so, he made the blood gush from his nostrils. Drusus, grinning, on

seeing it, uttered this ferocious saying—'IT IS NOT BLOOD, BUT THE GRAVY OF THRUSHES;' thus taunting the Consul as being intemperate at table. There was then no other restraint upon violence but the committal of fresh outrage, so that, as soon as his tribuneship was at an end, Drusus was secretly assassinated at night, without the perpetrators of his murder having been ever discovered. But these horrid discords were buried in his grave? By no means. Almost immediately were renewed what had so often convulsed the Republic, the discussion of the loans of the Patricians to the Plebeians.

"The judging of these cases belonged to the Prætor. A. Sempronius Asellius then held that office, and endeavoured to withstand the avidity of those creditors, who oppressed the people with usury. But to prove, as it were, that justice was an empty word, the Prætor was assaulted by the Patricians, while he celebrated a burnt-offering. Struck with stones, the sacred vessels fell from his hands, and he attempted to take refuge in the adjoining temple of Vesta; but his persecutors hindered his flight, and obliged him to betake himself to a tavern, where he was murdered.

In vain the Senate invited, with all its authority and great rewards, any one to discover the perpetrators of this dreadful crime; they remained undiscovered, although it was committed in the midst of your assembly. Nothing, indeed, was then sacred in Rome but the working of iniquity.

"And now there is unclasped to my recollection a vast volume, written in Roman blood, in which are displayed the deeds of two of the most bloodthirsty of men, Marius and Sylla." At these names the air resounded with lamentations; all countenances appeared sad, and horror was expressed in their attitudes. Cæsar, for a time, remained silent, like an intrepid pilot, who, from the prow, looks on the roaring billows, and then exclaimed —"Ah! tardy and vain complaints. But if the very names of these executioners make you shudder, why did you suffer their massacres?" Then he stopped, and during that dignified pause, the multitude grew calm.

Then proceeding, he added:—"Sylla was Consul in the hardy manhood of his tenth lustre, on the year following the murder of the Prætor Asellius. He requested to be the leader of the

army against the most glorious and formidable enemy of the Romans, Mithridates. Marius, then illustrious from his triumphs over the Numidians, the Teutones, and the Cimbri, and by reason of six consulships, was then almost in his seventieth year, fat in person, and infirm, but, stimulated by the maddening fever of ambition, he wished to drag out his declining years in Cappadocia and Pontus, and contended with Sylla for that expedition—an emulation glorious in its occasion, but dreadful in its consequences. For Marius, to obtain your suffrages, brought over to his wishes the Tribune Publius Sulpicius, a man insatiable both with gold and blood. He was, indeed, superior to every one in every vice; but which was the most prevalent it would have been somewhat difficult to decide. The citizenship of Rome, which, with our ancestors, was a reward bestowed only on faithful allies, was publicly sold by that Tribune. Thus he filled the Comitia with a set of wretches who had become citizens, not from having served, but from having depraved their country. And that the incredible audacity of his enterprises might be manifested, he kept always in his pay three thou-

sand armed satellites; nor did he ever appear in the Comitia without an escort of six hundred youths, of the Equestrian order, who bore the name of the Anti-Senate, and which absurd title they strove to merit by their seditious and tyrannical actions. The Senate having appointed Sylla to the chief military command against Mithridates, the Tribune spurred on his blood-thirsty Plebeians to support the pretensions of Marius. Swords were then unsheathed, and the work of slaughter commenced. The Consuls fled. The Comitia was strewed with dead bodies. Sylla took shelter with the army in the Campania; while Marius was proclaimed General, by the insane multitude, wading through pools of blood, still warm from the hearts of their fellow-citizens. But Sylla, who was never withheld from his purposes by any sentiment of pity, turned back the swords of those legions, destined to have achieved new triumphs in Asia, to accomplish his vengeance upon his country. His entrance within these walls was like that of a famished tiger. The streets and buildings were filled with wailings, shrieks, and lamentations, the clashing of arms, and the groans of the dy-

ing. Sylla himself grasping a torch, called aloud upon his soldiers to burn the city without mercy. You, moved alike by terror and despair, cast down from the roofs of your houses the flaming ruins upon the heads of the soldiery of Sylla; who, still more enraged thereby, added fresh fuel to the conflagration. It was no longer a tumult, but war at the sound of the trumpet. Your eagles, alike the ensigns of your destruction and slavery, were set up in Rome itself by the hands of one of its citizens;—a day as deplorable as infamous, since it was the last of every glimpse of true liberty. That Marius, who had several times saved Rome and Italy from the barbarians, then became a fugitive from these walls. If such a massacre may be distinguished by the name of a victory, Sylla remained the conqueror; and afterwards collecting his army in the Campania, passed over to Greece against Mithridates. Nor did our country breathe, even during the absence of these ferocious rivals, since discords now broke out, even between the two Consul's enemies, Octavius and Cinna. The latter, although he had made oath in the Capitol to remain faithful to Sylla, yet having afterwards re-

ceived three hundred talents from the partizans of Marius, put arms into the hands of the slaves and the populace, and proposed that he (Marius) should be recalled. You saw the war waged between these two Consuls in the very area of the Comitia, which was deluged by your blood, and covered with thousands of your dead bodies. Cinna, discomfited, quitted Rome, traversed Italy, and collected followers. Marius joined himself to him, and these two, inflamed with ferocious vengeance, returned to these walls, their swords still reeking in the blood of their fellow-countrymen.

"The defence of Rome was then intrusted to Pompeius Strabo. But, as if the very heavens beheld with horror this atrocious spectacle, (in which, under their native walls, brothers fell by the hands of brothers, and parents by the hands of their own children,) a dreadful tempest came down, and a flash of lightning blasted your defender himself. During the dreadful calamity, the populace, becoming still more barbarous, ravished from the funeral bier, on its way to the pile, his scorched and mangled remains, and dragged them through the streets. O Romans!

it was from that main-spring that Pompey, by you so justly denominated 'The Great,' whose illustrious deeds even I admire, although a rival in that which cannot be shared—the supreme authority of empire.

"But the necessity of fortune soon compelled the Senate to implore, not only peace, but pity, from its two cruel assailants. Cinna first entered, preceded by his Lictors. Marius halted at the very threshold of the gates, and, with a cruel sarcasm, declared, that he could not enter until the people assembled in Comitia had first recalled him from that exile to which they had previously condemned him. While you were carefully employed in collecting the suffrages, behold, Marius dispatched his legions upon his dreadful enterprise. Every gate of the city was shut, and his assassins (chiefly slaves selected for the purpose) being dispersed through the city, commenced the bloody work of destruction. You saw the streets blocked up with dead, their torn members cast about in sport by the multitude, the brains of infants dashed against the walls, their mothers ripped open, your virgins ravished; for, as the famished wolf tears to pieces the

lambs upon breaking into the sheepfold, so did the ferocious Marius exterminate the Roman citizens. The spikes of the rostrum were immediately covered with the heads of the most illustrious Patricians. You, Romans, so lately so free, or rather insolent, then became insensible to those most dreadful injuries; and, trembling at the sight of those incredible massacres, meekly held out your throats to the assassins, who, with savage mirth, plunged their swords into your hearts. What although, amidst this scene of cowardice, the Consul Cneius Octavius, seated in his curule chair, and clothed in his official robes, surrounded by his Lictors, awaited, undismayed, the fortune of the day; still that was not a sincere example of constancy, since, although assailed by these bloodhounds, he remained in that mournful attitude of state, and was there slain. Yet, on examining his dead body, there was found, folded in his bosom, the written prediction of an astrologer, which assured him, that he should not perish during these convulsions.

"Amidst the multitude of horrors which rush upon my memory, I know not which to select, or which to pass over. The Senator Sextus Li-

cinius was, by order of Marius, cast headlong from the Tarpeian Rock. Marius's own son having killed a Tribune of the people, sent the head to his father as a most acceptable offering. Two of my own race, Lucius and Caius Cæsar, brothers, fell during these dreadful scenes; of whom, Lucius having taken refuge under the roof of a client, whose life he had saved by his eloquence, was by him ungratefully denounced to the bloodhounds of Marius. Lucius was killed at the tomb of Varius, by a Tribune noted in his life for his enmity to every thing noble and virtuous, and whose manes, even after his death, would rejoice at this sacrifice of a victim to his natural ferocity. Publius Crassus, having witnessed the murder of his own son, and unable to survive his anguish, stabbed himself by the side of the beloved corse. Time has for ever buried in its bosom many of the horrors which then occurred; but this ought still to be lamented by you,—the death of Marc Antony the orator. Nor could any reason be surmised why Marius condemned him, excepting the innate hatred which the bad bear to the good. That butcher was at table when he learnt that

Marc Antony was taken by his myrmidons. Drunk with Falernian wine, and with blood, he shouted for very joy—clapping his hands, and beating the ground with his feet, with all the gestures of a savage. Those who were at table with him could scarcely restrain him from running out in person to put him to death. He then ordered Anius, his military Tribune, to bring him immediately that venerable head;—who, having gone to the house of Antony, sent in his satellites to perpetrate the murder, and waited in the porch. The aspect of so great a man, and his sublime eloquence, restrained their murderous swords. The Tribune, vexed at the short delay, entered the house, and, with his own hand, cut off the head of the orator; while his satellites, in the attitude of listeners, looked on with weeping eyes, moved by the last eloquent words of the illustrious victim. When the head was brought to Marius, having first clasped the murderer to his bosom, he placed the bloody offering amongst the viands on the table, at which he still sat in drunken revel. Long did he glut his glaring eyes with the bleeding head, which was after-

wards, with many others, stuck upon that very rostrum to become an object of terror, where it had so often been the source of delight.

" Neither merit nor dignity could restrain the blind fury of Marius, who, breathing only vengeance, was not to be satiated with deluging in blood that city, from whence, but a short time before, he had been cast out by the fortune of war. Insomuch that Catulus himself, lately his colleague, and who had especially contributed to the victory over the Cimbri, could not now obtain grace from him, as if his very glory had been hateful to him; neither present prayers, nor former merits, nor their common laurels, could at all appease the soul of Marius, who always uttered this dreadful answer,—LET HIM DIE. So that Catulus, in despair, caused a quantity of combustibles to be lighted in a closed cell, and suffocated himself in the flames. Likewise Merulus, the priest of Jupiter, killed himself beside the statue of that god, to prevent his falling into the bloody snares that were spread for him. So great, however, was the multitude of intended murders, that Marius himself had not time to pronounce sentence upon them all; therefore he

concerted with his executioners a summary mode of making the citizens die at his feet in the streets.—It was this, that whenever he did not return their salute to any one, death was immediately to be inflicted on that person. Numbers ran up to him to supplicate either for themselves or their relations, it appearing to be a matter of favour, amongst such a general carnage, to be permitted to live; and many fell at the feet of this hoary butcher, whom, with a fatal silence, he condemned to instant destruction: Even his very friends, embarked in the same bloody crimes, never approached him, during these dreadful days, but with the paleness of death on their countenances. Five entire days and nights did this unchained monster burn and cover with gore this earth, which ought to have opened and swallowed him up. Neither was his boundless vengeance confined within these walls, for the whole of Italy was drenched in blood; during which proceedings, he was in the habit of indulging in splendid banquets, as if delighted to see blood run in reeking currents. At length his own intemperance inflicted that retributive justice which more justly belonged to your daggers;

Marius finally died of gluttony, and at an advanced age, who ought rather to have died in his cradle, or from starvation. It is difficult to say, whether he had been most fatal to our enemies or to ourselves. But Rome was not relieved, even by his death, from the dreadful weight of oppression; for, during the celebration of his funeral obsequies, Fimbria, the most ferocious of his satellites, moved by sudden fury, ordered his assassins to slay Scævola, the Pontifex Maximus, who was performing the sacred rites. And had he not had the good fortune to escape by flight, he would have added to his unheard-of audacity, that of citing this grave, wise, and inviolable man to the Comitia as an accused criminal—where, when Fimbria was called upon to prefer his complaint, he said, it was because he had not received on his person the blows that were destined for him. Thereafter the name, as well as the whole atrocity of Marius, remained like an accursed inheritance in his son, who, having been elected Consul four years after the death of his father, was desirous to gather in the lives of the most virtuous who remained, like straggling ears of corn, forgotten during the harvest. But being

unable to equal his father in cruelty, he wished to surpass him in perfidy; for having convoked the Senate, while the Senators were sitting in the hall, the majority were basely murdered by the myrmidons of Marius, now become expert in acts of blood. In which massacre was finally comprised Scævola, who expired from his wounds in the vestibule of the temple of Vesta.

"Whilst these horrors contaminated Rome, Sylla was fighting Mithridates in Asia. But of a sudden, turning the arms of his legions against us, they appeared here like ministers of vengeance. And, as a preliminary act, whilst he presided in the Senate in the temple of Bellona, he caused upwards of six thousand Marian soldiers, who had surrendered themselves as prisoners of war, and were shut up in an adjoining enclosure, to be put to death. The screams of such a multitude, in all the agonies of violent and bloody death, rendered mute the trembling Senators. A silence deep as death pervaded that venerable assembly, their cheeks, pale as ashes, and anxious looking eyes, alone showed what was passing through their minds. But Sylla, as if enjoying the most perfect tranquillity, uttered

this sentence, marvellous for its calm ferociousness:—'ATTEND TO BUSINESS: THESE ARE ONLY A FEW SEDITIOUS PERSONS, WHO, BY MY ORDERS, ARE SUFFERING CHASTISEMENT.' After this butchery, you beheld immediately the streets swimming in blood, while the blood-thirsty myrmidons of Sylla traversed the city in every direction. And amidst such an insecurity of life, the invention of proscription appeared almost an act of clemency, because the fatal board, upon which so many illustrious lives were sold for two talents each, left a hope for those whose names were omitted, that they might perchance escape. There appeared first, inscribed upon that roll of death, the two Consuls of that ever memorable and fatal year, next the most illustrious Patricians and Senators, to the number nearly of five thousand. And in order that the memory of such a carnage might not perish, Sylla, with stupendous audacity, caused the names of all the murdered to be enrolled on the public register. Then again, by a dreadful perversion of men's reason, all moral distinctions between vice and virtue were completely obliterated and confounded. Thus if a proscribed father, son, or brother, were shel-

tered by brother, father, son, or any near relation, they also who sheltered them were doomed to the same death. But if the relations put to death the proscribed person, then they obtained both the praise and reward, as happened to Catiline, who commenced his fatal career by putting to death his own brother.

"Neither temples, nor domestic hearths, nor a father's house, nor the bridal-bed, formed any refuge from the murderous stratagems put in practice over the whole of Italy. Husbands were stabbed within the trembling arms of their consorts, sons on the palpitating bosoms of their mothers; nor was the proscription confined to men only, for women also were included, Sylla finally condemning that sex, (too weak to excite the jealousy of authority, and which has ever been held inviolate amongst the most barbarous nations,) and which in every humane breast have wont rather to extinguish than to kindle cruelty and rage."

CONFERENCE THE FOURTH.

The Spectre of Gratidianus.

The Dictator was thus speaking when there appeared a ghost, whose unsteady and wavering head appeared as if it had been lately struck off and replaced on his shoulders. I saw the marks of the axe in a bloody streak on his throat. He was without eyes or hands, and when he came nigh to the Dictator, he stretched forth his bleeding stumps, as if imploring pity or vengeance. Anon there flowed from his deep and eyeless orbits tears mingled with blood. Alas! what a horrific sight! Cæsar suspended his discourse, and showed himself grieved at the spectacle. The Spectre then hid himself amongst the multitude, as if backward at displaying himself so mutilated. The Dictator then proceeded:—"Behold a

dreadful excess of Catiline, and of which only a fratricide could be capable. That is Gratidianus, an illustrious Patrician, and who was proscribed because he was the nephew of Marius. Catiline invented and directed the mode of his death. First, he was scourged through the streets by the executioner, his eyes were then scooped out, his tongue torn out, and hands chopt from his wrists, all his bones broken, and, lastly, his head cut off. But at least the tribute of pity was granted to this strange atrocity? By no means:—For a Senator having fainted on beholding it, was immediately put to death by the myrmidons of Marius. Catiline himself was desirous to present this head to Sylla, and afterwards washed his hands, steeped in blood, in the lustral waters of the temple of Apollo, as if he had fulfilled a sacred ceremony.

"In the meantime, within the palace of Sylla, thrown open to daily murders, were poured in the heads of the proscribed from all parts of Italy; and the murderers there received their rewards as from the public treasury of atrocity. Thither also the proscribed were dragged alive, and dispatched thereafter with unheard-of modes of cruel-

ty. Nor do I believe that there existed in those dreadful days any one who merited the name of a Roman citizen, except one young man of fourteen years of age—our venerable Cato; who being taken in person by his grandfather to the palace of Sylla, because their families had been united by friendship in former days, when he saw these floors polluted with blood, was fired with generous indignation. Nor could he believe that Rome would suffer such abominations, and lamented that he had not a dagger to slay the horrid tyrant. And such was the violence of his feelings, that his uncle could with great difficulty restrain him from displaying by his actions his lofty and perilous sentiments. I, myself, now speaking to you, was comprised in the number of the proscribed, and for no other crime excepting that I was allied to the family of Marius. I was then in my eighteenth year, and was obliged to escape by flight from my persecutors. But, when afterwards a great many persons supplicated constantly the tyrant in my behalf, at length he yielded, more from weariness than from pity, and erased my name from the roll. But so averse

was his disposition to clemency, that he used daily to regret that he had pardoned me.

" But what powers of eloquence can express all these massacres! Those still untold will ever remain greater than those enumerated, for my tongue and time would sooner fail me than the subject-matter, which is vast as the ocean. The entire city was proscribed, and only tenanted by dead bodies scattered through the deserted streets. Preneste was laid waste from the slaughter therein of twelve thousand of the proscribed, besides Spoleto, Interamna, Florentia, Sulmon, Bovianum, Esernia, Telesia, and many other places were deluged with blood, sacked, burnt, and destroyed. After which, Sylla assumed the title of Dictator, to which, by your cowardice, was added that unheard of power, that whatever was done by him was to be approved. Availing himself of which, he immediately appeared in the Comitia with twenty-four Lictors, who carried axes within their fasces, the first time that these instruments of death had been introduced into them. Then, as an act of civil sport, he went through a ceremony, as a proof both of his insolence and your cowardly downfall, by inviting the people to choose

the new Consuls. For Lucius Offella, a highly respected Patrician, having offered himself as a candidate for that dignity, Sylla, with great calmness, from his exalted seat, gave orders to a Centurion to put to death that candidate; and while he was actually passing through the crowd requesting their suffrages, he was laid prostrate by the Centurion. And upon the latter being conducted as a culprit before Sylla by the enraged populace, they obtained nothing more than this sentence, uttered with grave solemnity:—'LET HIM ALONE, FOR HE HAS ONLY DONE WHAT I COMMANDED HIM.'

"A base and melancholy silence closed your lips;—there was neither the heart nor the arm of a Roman found in that great assembly, so that every one trembling went his way. Thus he sat during the day-time in the Comitia, like an infernal judge, sentencing to perpetual punishments; and afterwards at night, in his own palace, rioted in excess, devoid of care—a happy tyrant. There were assembled together actors, musicians, the most dissolute youths of both sexes, and gluttonous parasites. Sylla, prodigal of the wealth of the proscribed, expended great

part of their gold in dissolute entertainments, in idle fooleries, and intemperate suppers. And as he had put to death all the better classes, so, to compensate their loss, he bestowed the citizenship on the most worthless. Thus he nominated, at least, full 10,000 of his own freedmen, citizens of Rome, wretches at all times ready to fulfil the will of their implacable master. By these means, he raised himself aloft as upon a mountain of Roman heads; and after having destroyed, by means of wars, proscriptions, stratagems, and assassins, more than 100,000 of you, amongst whom were 90 Senators and 2000 Knights, conferred on himself the title of Good, Fortunate, and Happy. It is true, that, after having perpetrated so many massacres, he threw down the axe, and passed his last years in the calm retirement of philosophy: but it still remains a doubtful question, whether it was the effect of the extreme contempt in which he held you, or of that debasement to which he had reduced your minds. This, at least, is certain, that so thoroughly fallen were ye, though formerly so averse to tyrants, that even then, when ye had become the arbiters of your own liberties,

ye remained slaves. Thus it is, when you withdraw the yoke from the neck of the ox, he remains bent down, awaiting it to be again put on.

"O, Tullius! now we arrive at our own unhappy times, when we saw driven from the Comitia, with blows of sticks and stones, Cato, that most inviolable citizen, and the Consul Metellus cast into prison by Flavius the Tribune; thou thyself mayst remember the cruel scoffings of Clodius the Tribune, who excited the people in the Comitia to pelt thee with mud; thou afterwards beheldst in these tumults, the orator Hortensius nearly killed by the rage of the populace, and the Senator Vibienus slain! Those consular fasces, the very sight of which, in the days of our ancestors, suppressed every insurrection of the people, were now held by them in utter contempt. Clodius filled the Comitia and the Forum with wretches, the outcasts of the prisons, and with gladiators, who in every street left traces of their cruelty. The Tiber, stained with your blood, moved its waters slowly, loaded with the numbers of the slain. No longer suffrages bestowed offices, candidates no longer entreated with humility, but the ambitious, with audacity

leading on their armed followers, dared their competitors to try the issue of open war.

"Considering, then, these excesses, which I have rather sketched than described, I believe it will appear to thee, O Marcus Brutus, and to this multitude, that genuine liberty had been with us destroyed by a long series of outrages, and that there remained not a hope for any other condition, excepting that of a vigorous and absolute government to restrain this unbounded licentiousness. Therefore, exalted minds, who disdained slavery, were constrained to endeavour to exalt themselves to that pitch, that they might remain out of the reach of insult. Which opinion, full of glorious peril, I entertained, and displayed by my deeds. Several others, too, confirmed it in various modes, but all agreed in declaring, that every hope of liberty was extinct. You beheld the great Lucullus, after having made to flee before your eagles Tigranes and Mithridates, beyond the currents of the Tigris, and the summits of Mount Taurus, consume the remainder of his days in repose, disdaining to present himself to the outrages of the vulgar. In as much as he had formerly been renowned for the splendour of his

triumphs, so was he afterwards for the luxury of his suppers. By which effeminate negligence of your civil discords, he evidently showed that he thought them undeserving of greater care; and that Cato, who showed such contempt for my clemency at Utica, before slaying himself, left, as his last advice to his son, never to intermeddle in affairs of State, as being no longer suited to an honest man. Several other virtuous and amiable men also quitted these walls to escape the tempest, and sought shelter in the quiet and innocent haven of domestic life. Of that number was Pomponius, who lingered at Athens till we, his friends, were all chagrined at the loss of his delightful converse. Thou, also, O Marcus Tullius, consideredst thy country so oppressed, that, in sorrow, thou clothedst thyself in mourning, and a great many Patricians followed thy example, and even the Senate appeared in that dismal costume, as paying a funeral rite at the death of liberty. Even after the battle of Pharsalia, which I would call fortunate, if I had not conquered the Romans with Romans, thou wert wont to say, that it was expedient, not only to yield, but to throw down your arms.

"In a country so afflicted, there were two citizens celebrated for many illustrious deeds, and they might have divided the empire between them. One was Pompey—the other myself. He remained in Italy, I in Gaul, reduced by me, with no common degree of glory, under your dominion. The fate of Rome hung in suspense, every mind was perplexed, every authority uncertain except that of arms. But the Senate, preserving only its pride, after its greatness had passed away, wished to constrain me to quit that army, which had gained me all my triumphs, and to trust myself, single and unarmed, amidst their civil commotions. Although such an order was equally contemptible as the assembly which issued it, yet I declared myself willing to obey, as soon as Pompey had placed himself in the same situation. But I could obtain no other answer, except that I was to obey it; and that as to my rival, they, the Senators, would deliberate about him at their pleasure. Then, under the pretext of sending an expedition against the Parthians, the Senate obliged me to yield up two legions; and this I did, believing in their disgraceful hypocrisy; but they were im-

mediately added to the army of Pompey, and remained in Italy to oppose me. Nevertheless I continued willing to obey the Senate upon the aforesaid just conditions. But they treated my letters of submission with contempt.

"And so sincerely desirous was I of avoiding all fatal extremities, that at length I proposed that Pompey should continue in the command of the whole army, provided I was left with one single legion, and the government of Illyria. These (I may say) disgraceful conditions were heard by the Senators with disdain, and thus they declared war against me, as the enemy of my country. I presented myself, therefore, on the banks of the Rubicon, the boundary of my province, constrained, I shall not say, to levy war, but to defend myself. But, like a child in the presence of a cruel mother, when I had set my foot upon the bridge, I felt those spirits sink within my breast which had always hitherto prompted me to the greatest undertakings. An icy coldness came over me to that degree, that, remaining in suspense, I turned round to Asinius Pollio, who was then near me, and trembling, said to him—'It is still in our power to recede, but if we

should go forward, arms alone must decide the question.' He listened silently,—whilst the rest also, by their silence, blamed my hesitation. I advanced then like one who, throwing himself headlong into an abyss, shuts his eyes, that he may not behold its fearful depth.

"Then that magnanimous Pompey, who had always boasted, that wherever he should stamp on the earth with his foot, whole legions would rise up, fled, not only from Rome, but from Italy, although he had a superior number of fighting men. The people gave way to my squadrons, conquerors rather through their clemency, than through deeds of blood.

"I pursued Pompey into Greece, always, but in vain, proposing peace to him upon reasonable terms. I was then compelled, as a last resource, to try my fortune at Pharsalia, where I no longer recognised the great Pompey, who, as if overcome by adverse fortune, after fighting but badly, took to flight. But if there be any virtue of my mortal life upon which I may plume myself in this my state of immortality, it is certainly this, that on that bloody day I moderated, to my utmost, the fatal effects of the defeat. As soon as

I saw that the victory was certain, I rode through the ranks, exclaiming to my men, GIVE QUARTER TO THE ROMANS! At which humane order, the conquered remained in their camp secure, nor attempted to fly, because they confided in my clemency. All joyless, I stood a conqueror, a living Roman, amidst my dead countrymen! Thereafter contemplating these bitter fruits of civil discords, I, in accents of woe, heard both by the vanquished and the victors, ceased not to bewail the horrid necessity which had constrained me to draw the sword when every law was despised, all rights overthrown, all authority contemned.

"After that victory, not contented only with pardoning all those who implored my pity, I wished even to destroy every pretext for vengeance. For having found many letters written to Pompey by his friends, I caused them all to be burned unread. Thus I remained willingly blind to the schemes of the opposite faction, preferring rather to live in danger than amidst suspicion. Thou also, O Brutus, on that same bloody day, wast one of my greatest causes of anxiety. Thou, a follower of Pompey, although he had

murdered thy father, stoodst in Pharsalia opposed to me, who had ever loved thee like a son. I, galloping up and down through the ranks, commanded my soldiers, individually, not to use their arms against thee, but leave an opening to escape from them. Believe me, my heart trembled in my bosom, when, amidst so many thousands of killed, I dreaded to meet with thee either wounded or slain.

"But thou, thirsting for my blood, and, indeed, fatally beloved, might then have satiated it with honour on that day, by tracking me amidst the din of arms. It would have been an honourable fate to have fallen in so audacious an attempt, rather than to have lived to implore mercy, and having obtained it, to conceal for so many years the hatred in thy breast, with smiles upon thy face, and then finally tearing aside the veil, to display thyself completely perfidious and ungrateful.

"Still methinks I see thee with thy upraised dagger, and those scowling eyes, in which I too late read the sentence of my death. I died, I believe, more from my astonishment than from my wounds, at seeing that my betrayers were

those on whom I had conferred the greatest obligations, and in whom I had reposed the greatest confidence, Amongst whom as soon as I beheld thee, I abandoned the defence of a life which I felt convinced was hateful to thee. Burying my face in my robe, I abandoned my body to your daggers, and with groans my spirit winged its flight to the darksome valley of death.

"What was my government, whether paternal, merciful, and really sincere, I call upon ye, O Romans, sincerely to bear testimony. Thou, O Brutus, wouldst, indeed, have rather witnessed a continual series of civil wars, not for liberty, but for the choice of a tyrant. But thy mind was overwhelmed with a fatal forgetfulness, when thou hoped that, by killing me, no worse ruler would succeed, and wert thus prompt in setting free a nation of slaves."

CONFERENCE FIFTH.

The Gracchi.

Cæsar was silent, and sorrowfully fixed his eyes upon Brutus, who bent his own upon the ground. Then I heard the mingled voices of the multitude, who reasoned with divers opinions upon this great event. But Tullius preserved a modest silence, backward to pronounce in so great a cause. When Brutus, lifting up his countenance, slowly commenced :—

" Thou speakest like a tyrant, as thou wert, most crafty, and most flattering. No courtesan was ever more skilful in seducing of her lovers, than thou wert in beguiling men into slavery. But it ill becomes thee to boast of having granted his life to one from whom thou ought not to have taken it away. That, indeed, is the

especial vice of tyranny, to boast itself merciful, whenever it abstains from inflicting any injury which may be in its power. Certainly it is not clemency to leave alive those who defend their native country, and the liberty of their forefathers; but it is a real crime to fight against them, and the worst of crimes, to put them to death.

"Didst thou not find, in thy hostile entrance into this city, the streets deserted, the houses empty, the Consuls, the Senate, the Patricians, the Priests, and, in fine, all the better classes, gone over to Pompey?—For there, indeed, was our real country, while to thee only the timid populace adhered. Nor in order to conceal thy misdeeds, is it befitting to recur to the pretended necessity of an absolute government; for thou reasonest like the empiric, who, having killed the sick man, declared it impossible that he could live. Thou hast narrated with much art our civil commotions, in order to lead the way to that conclusion so much desired by thee, that only absolute power could put an end to them. But if Pompey had had as much good fortune as he had justice on his side, thou wouldst have

seen that our native country was not in so very desperate a condition. He, terrible to our enemies, but towards ourselves mild, splendid, and yet not overbearing in his glory, always moderate amidst his prosperity, aspired to no other dignity in his country, but that it should place a liberal confidence in his sincere virtues. For in as much as his triumphs exalted him above every one, so did he delight to descend to a common equality; submitting himself to civil ordinances; a sincere lover of concord; reverent towards the Senate; courting no other dignity than that of being a citizen. Thou, on the contrary, never exulted more than in despising that venerable assembly, scoffing at all laws, and declaring thy native country besotted. For that reason, didst thou narrate the atrocities of Sylla, and such certainly they were; but he at least threw down the axe, either wearied or satiated, and said,—'Behold me on a level with yourselves, and ready to render ye a reason for whatever blood I have shed;' which act diffused a degree of lustre ever over his atrocities. He put to death numerous citizens, but spared the country itself; whilst thou, on the contrary, wert the destruction of both.

"At nothing, however, do I marvel so much, as at thy accusation, that I put thee to death treacherously; and in what other manner could, or, indeed, ought such an enterprise to be executed?

"I had all the best citizens, conscious and approving of my purpose; nor was I moved thereto, except with their decided and universal consent. Besides, that warfare was still more just than thine at Pharsalia, although not equally adventurous. So great, besides, is thy immorality, that thou callest me son, and blamest me for having dissolved that natural tie; but the dignity of morals forbids that the effects of culpable familiarities should be openly displayed; for if thou gavest me existence,—the offspring of an unlawful bed,—I put thee to death, in order that my country might exist. I postponed all other affections to that; my heart was cold to all extrinsic circumstances, and only inflamed with that of generous vengeance. Not that I hated Cæsar, but his tyranny. Why otherwise did my hand tremble when I plunged the dagger? why did my purpose waver, or why was my virtue in danger? Let it suffice thee, O magnanimous

enemy, to know that thou hadst at least for a moment rendered dubious the constancy of Brutus."

Having thus spoke, he was silent; then stretched out his hand to the Dictator—he kindly grasped it—and it appeared to me that some tears stole silently down both their cheeks as they stood in this pensive attitude.

The two illustrious rivals remained thus, when there issued from the crowd a matron, who led by the hand two youths of daring aspest, and exclaimed—

"Behold, O Romans, the first victims of tyranny, your ill-rewarded defenders. No one can boast of having suffered in a nobler cause than those; and no mother can presume to have produced amongst us citizens better than these young men." So saying, she led the two brothers by the hands, placed them in the middle, and added, "Now do ye speak." One of them then, with a sorrowful voice, commenced:—

"I hope that ye again recognize in me, although without a corporeal substance, Tiberius Gracchus. This is Caius, my brother; and this,

although it is scarcely necessary that I should remind you, is Cornelia, our mother. Ye will easily recognize by her pensive countenance the daughter of Scipio Africanus, and the heiress of all his greatness of soul. We are here thrown abroad by the stormy wave, now excited with the abyss of death, by these venerable spoils. It behoves thee, O mother, to be comforted, since thou now beholdest, after such a lapse of years, these tombs, where are the glorious ashes of thy race."

As a cloud of a sudden obscures the brilliancy of the moon, so these words clouded with sadness the pensive countenance of the matron; her sons extending their arms to her, appeared to impart comfort. A strange sadness pervaded the assembly, in evidence of their reverential expectation.—When, lo, the Lady hastily, with her hand, removed the veil from her forehead, and shaking her head, so that her dishevelled hair fell down over her white shoulders, thus exclaimed:—

"Wretched bones, in vain bathed with our tears! since neither the fame of your deeds, nor the splendour of your virtues, have availed in preserving ye from the most indecent outrages; nor our care in placing you in these tombs; nor

your names there recorded, have sufficed to protect you from the injuries of fortune; nor these, your urns, which the Quirites were wont to approach in sorrowful silence. Fortunate, however, was my lot in having left my mortal covering in Misenum, where I dragged out the latter part of a tumultuous life, in narrating, with a becoming pride, your adventures, those of my generous sons, and of my illustrious parent. But thou, least of all wretched, O Great Africanus, who, at a distance from thy ungrateful country, thou passedst the declining years of thy illustrious life, in dignified repose, at Linternum, and there laidst down thy mortal coil." So saying, she tore asunder the matron's fillets, which were twisted round her hair, while tears of anger flowed from her eyes. Then Tiberius thus calmly addressed her:—

"O mother, nothing is exempt here below from the influence of time. The celebrated nations who preceded us suffered the same injuries as we do now. Century after century following close upon each other, like the waves of the ocean, swallow up the creations of human grandeur, and cast them down into the abysses of

oblivion. Upon this earth the generations of men start up and disappear, like fleeting shadows, the existing race treading upon the tombs of their ancestors, till the boisterous whirlwind at length reduces equally to dust the superb mausoleum, the humble tombs, and the lamented ashes. Cease, then, to contend, O mother, with our common and eternal lot."

Then she intrepidly replied:—"No time ought to overthrow the glory of the Scipios, because the whole universe was filled with its splendour. Surely Italy must be now exposed to the insults of barbarians and corsairs, or perhaps is deserted, or in the power of the conquerors, who have overwhelmed our history in the blood of the vanquished. No longer does any one here understand our language; no longer is the sound of our former fame heard, else assuredly these tombs, on which were recorded such splendid names, would not have been thus overthrown."

Here I was about to rush forward and vindicate our age, but was withheld by the wish to listen to these surprising conferences, which I

feared to interrupt by any hasty proceeding on my part.

Then Tullius, Cæsar, Brutus, Antony, and the other more illustrious ghosts, anxiously contemplated these celebrated shades, never before beheld by these their posterity. The aspect of Tiberius was grave, but gentle, that of Caius gloomy and stern. Their ages appeared to be under thirty. Cornelia had the appearance of mature beauty, unimpaired by the injuries of time; without effeminacy; a certain warlike expression of eye, and strong marked eyebrows, with full and composed lips, devoid of smiles, ornamented that countenance of chaste and imposing elegance. But Tiberius, after looking around him, thus began:—

"Methinks I still behold, O my Romans, impressed upon your countenances your ancient benevolence. Acknowledge then in me a patriot who suffered death for your liberty. These walls were called their native country by the rich, although for us they were a sheepfold of their tyranny. We, perpetually oppressed by their usury, always in their debt, always prodigal of our blood, were driven into wars by their

Consuls, to free themselves from the annoyance of our just complaints. The Patricians kept filling the ears of each other with these venerable words,—Native Country—Republic—Glory and Greatness of the Roman People—but their chests with gold, and their bellies with sumptuous banquets. From the time of the foundation of the Republic, the well known, but constantly evaded Licinian Law had determined, that the public territory acquired by the army should be divided in common. But these same fields, of which the clods were saturated with our blood, were always given away to Patricians, who were reclining at their luxurious boards, whilst we furnished them out. I, the Tribune whom ye betrayed and belied, through whose rent doublet appeared the scars of wounds acquired in battle, presented my breast against that long established theft. My plan of resistance was strictly legal, founded on reason and the laws, but my treacherous adversaries dexterously withdrew from the convened assembly the urns and ballots, when the suffrages were ready.

"As by this artifice my first efforts were evaded, so were my second combated by atro-

cious violence; ye saw the robed Senators come against me in hostile array, supported by their slaves and clients. I attempted to allay that tumult with words, but no human voice had power to overcome the immense force of the Comitia, raging like a sea. Being unable to make known the peril in which I stood, I put my right hand to my head, in signal that it was exposed to imminent outrage. Then I saw the Consul Scipio Nasica gather up his robe in his left hand, and then lifting up his right, rush on me, leading forward the whole Senate and their satellites. From the movement of his lips and the appearance of his eyes, he no doubt, at the same time, uttered some fierce and threatening language, which I did not hear. The fury of the Patrician body advanced towards me like an inundation. The Conscript fathers tore up in wrath the benches of the Comitia, and, armed with the fragments, assailed my unarmed and inviolable person. The stupid populace gave way before the Senators, (if cruel oppressors are deserving such an appellation,) and then fell prostrate under the blows of their slaves. I, oppressed by the weighty folds of ample robes, and

with both my temples laid open with gashes, expired, lamenting more the fate of Rome than of myself. But, if there exists amongst you any feeling of gratitude towards me, who perished thus miserably for your sakes, tell me, I beseech you, why were they so furiously excited against me for having touched my forehead, and who were my murderers?"

To which request Caius answering, said, "Alas, my brother, thus opportunely met after such a long lapse of time in this ocean of death, why dost thou wish to hear of evils greater than those which in vain thou didst attempt to correct?—That motion of thine was with ready fraud interpreted by the Senators into a sign, that a Royal Crown was demanded by thee; then the knaves exclaimed, exaggerating that desire of thine, to excite against thee the fury of the vulgar.

"The Consul Nasica, in that attitude in which you saw him, cried aloud, 'WHOEVER DESIRES TO SAVE HIS COUNTRY, LET HIM NOW FOLLOW ME.'—Immediately on which, the Patrician order rushed on desperately, as if impelled by a hurricane to suffer shipwreck along with their common country. Then we beheld the toga,

the emblem of eloquence and of peace, the bearer of destruction and bloodshed. You yourself, laid prostrate by the rushing mob, were struck on the head by your own colleagues, Satirigus and Rufus, with fragments of the seats; and so great was his glory in crime, that Rufus used afterwards to boast of these blows as of some glorious deed. In that tumult, no fewer than three hundred citizens remained dead in the Comitia. In vain I requested from the ferocious Patricians, that they would give me up thy dead body, that I might pay it the usual funeral honours. For it was thrown into the Tiber, and carried by its currents into the sea to be the sport of tempests. Neither was the vengeance of the Senate to be satiated by these murders: for many were afterwards driven into exile, others decapitated, because they were of liberal sentiments, and favourers of the first cause, amongst whom C. Billius, shut up in a cask with serpents, was thus sacrificed to the wrath of the Senate, by whom this abominable mode of punishment was first invented. But neither thy death, nor all these cruelties, abated my constancy; on the contrary, they only acted as a further excitement. On that

day, when they ought finally to have granted to the people the rewards acquired by their valour, my consort, who had a presentiment that I would never again return to her embraces, threw herself on her knees at my feet, as I was upon crossing the threshold clasping to her bursting bosom our only infant. But I, on that last and dearest of all mornings, only anxious about my glorious resolution, remained unmoved at her transports, which would have melted the heart of a savage. Stately and silently I stalked from that porch, which I was doomed never again to enter, and beheld my wretched wife lying there in a fainting, perhaps an expiring state. Neither pity for her nor for my infant withheld me, but urged by patriotism only, I proceeded to the Comitia. Assuredly the severity of Brutus was marvellous, who sacrificed both his sons for the salvation of Rome. But he at last condemned the traitors who had betrayed it. Whilst I beheld the fall of a consort, not only innocent, but resplendent from the graces of her mind and the beauty of her person, and universally respected for the unblemished correctness of her conduct."

CONFERENCE SIXTH.

Episode on the Death of Scipio Èmilianus, and Conclusion upon that of Cæsar the Dictator.

SCARCELY had he thus spoken, when there appeared a female spirit of mild and modest aspect. She slowly removed with her hand the veil from her countenance, and showed her downcast eyes suffused in tears. Caius Gracchus beheld her for some time in doubt, then extending to her his right hand, joyfully exclaimed, "Art thou then Licinia, whom, in vain, I have always sought for during this eternal peregrination?"

And she tenderly answered:—"Yes, I am that identical person—thy wretched wife. That was not my last day, but I led a short and sorrowful life afterwards, still more lamentable than

even death itself. Such of us as were made widows by that fatal discord, were forbidden to trim their garments with mourning, and from me even my dowry was withdrawn. Thus the hostile Patricians vented their cruel rancour even on our weak sex. Fully six thousand citizens fell in that day's conflict, during which the Tiber was dyed with the blood of Romans. Fulvius, the late Consul, and then victor over the Gauls, the most illustrious of thy followers, was put to death by the Senators while in a bath, together with one of his sons. Another of his sons, then only in his eighteenth year, and as tender as innocent, was then a hostage with the implacable Senators. He implored mercy, which rocks of flint would not have refused, but he was, by these ferocious human wolves, cruelly murdered."

Then Caius impetuously exclaimed :—" This, then, is the reward bestowed on the defenders of your liberties, ye ungrateful people, unworthy to enjoy them! I came on that execrable day into the Comitia, unarmed and defenceless; the laws were my shield, and my voice my weapon. On the contrary, the Consuls had with them Cretan archers, expert in the use of the dart,

and held in pay by them to pierce the breasts of Romans. The populace vanquished, sought refuge on the Aventine hill, and were there butchered in cold blood. Still it is my boast, that I did not draw my sword on that day, preferring rather to perish with innocence, than to conquer with ignominy. And yet ye abandoned to the fury of the conscript fathers, me, your Tribune, the brother, too, of one late so dear to you, and who had laid down his life in your service! Not a single arm amongst you was lifted up in my defence; ye beheld me overwhelmed, without giving me any other assistance than words, many of you basely exhorting me to fly. Withdrawing myself at length, I took refuge within the grove dedicated to the Furies, an asylum the most befitting my desperate situation. There the winds howled in symphony with my complaints against the ingratitude of the multitude, and the perversity of fortune. My slave, Philocrates, alone remained with me, who, as a last token of his fidelity, and at my own request, plunged his sword into my heart."

Here the Tribune stopt, and his consort, reclining herself in a sorrowful attitude, with both

her hands on his shoulder, let fall her rosy cheek on them in all the melting luxury of woe. He turned towards her his manly countenance, in which was depicted the struggle between constancy and commiseration. During his discourse, I had been remarking, that inasmuch as his brother was grave, composed, and decorous in his mode of expression, so did he declaim, with a vehemence bordering upon passion.

All the Spectres seemed to be tacitly revolving in their thoughts the sentiments they had heard; during which suspense, I beheld enter an armed ghost, seemingly a warrior in deportment. He brandished his arms in a menacing manner, and at the same time fixed his fierce eyes on the two brother Tribunes. The air resounded with the clashing of his armour. They were silent, as if overcome with wonder; but their mother turned her pensive eyes upon the audacious Spectre, laying her left hand on her side, and with her right embracing one of the tombs of her ancestors.

The new ghost then thus commenced:—"Do I again behold you, ye seditious brothers, a race so fatal to your country, since, unarmed, ye wag-

ed upon it a more fatal warfare than that of open violence! Ye, by seducing the people by an impossible equality of fortunes, excited tumults, disastrous not only to Rome, but to the whole of Italy; for although that law, so much favoured by you, might have been useful and just in its commencement, yet, in the progress of time, having been laid aside, it could not be again brought into activity, without producing an anarchical uncertainty in property, against which innovations, the Scipios more particularly reared those heads which fame had adorned with triumphant and well merited laurels. Wherefore, Nasica put thee to death, O Tiberius! in necessary and just war in the Comitia, as a public enemy; and I openly opposed thee, O fatal Caius—I, the son of Paulus Æmilius, that wonderful conqueror—I, although not born a Scipio, yet adopted amongst their race, and worthy of it—I, the overthrower of Carthage—your protector, ye Romans, and the terror of your enemies—Scipio Emilianus. But ye, Plebeian brothers, still more closely allied by crime than by blood, have narrated our cruelties, but have artfully concealed your own misdeeds. For who

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shed the first blood in these fatal tumults, excited by you yourselves, ye atrocious people, always unworthy of liberty, because ye degraded it into licentiousness?—You, base when oppressed, insolent when free, committed the first outrage on the sacred person of the Tribune Octavius, dragged from the rostrum by the ferocious multitude whilst he uttered a harangue; he was with difficulty preserved by the wonderful fidelity of a slave, who, much more worthy than you of liberty, rushed into the tumult to ward off the blows, which, falling upon his face, dashed out his eyes. Methinks I still behold him groping his way through the Comitia, with his sockets eyeless and bloody, and in mournful tones, asking tidings of his dear master's fate. Reproach, therefore, yourselves for having given the first example of laying violent hands on the Tribunes, and by thus despising all authority, rendered violence necessary. Even I am a fatal instance of your ferocity, who, although the husband of Sempronia, your sister, preferred the welfare of my country to that of my relations. I stood like a watch-tower, upon which were rivetted all eyes and expectations for the common safety. That

I defended in the Comitia verbally, with gentleness, and persuasive reasoning. Nevertheless, I was awakened in the night, while I lay in the calm slumbers of my bridal-bed along with my consort, by some unknown traitor, who suddenly suffocated me. My mind was still dubious whether I was in reality suffering death, or only a dreadful dream, when I was engulfed in these eternal mists. It were a happy death to have fallen in the field of victory, gazing with the last glance of the fading eye upon the flying enemy; but thus to perish from cruel treachery in one's own bridal-bed, and to slumber unto death, is what cannot fail to arouse vengeance in every breast."

Cornelia listened in the deepest silence, unmoved in her attitude, intrepid in her countenance; and when he finished, thus commenced:—"If thou art grieved at having been deprived of life when past thy eleventh lustre, and satiated with glory and fortune, what ought not to be the lamentations of these my sons, murdered in the cruel manner thou hast heard, in the very morning of their illustrious days, in the flower of their age, when they were the hopes of the peo-

ple, and the terror of tyrants. When they fell, they were bewailed by the whole of Italy, but not by these eyes of mine. To a matron as I am of a magnanimous race, the mother of generous Tribunes, put to death in so illustrious a cause, a lofty joy was more befitting. To have produced those dead, even although in vain, for you, O Romans, is my boast. My only grief is, that, when these perished, I had not two more who might, like these, encounter the rage of the Senators, and the treachery of the Nobles and Patricians, in attempting the same lofty enterprises. I know not who was guilty of thy unhappy death, but I well know that thou, adopted by my brother for his child, became the leader of the tyrant against my son. I know that the Senate proposed the reward of as much gold as the head of my son Caius might weigh, to any one who would bring it to them separated from his body. I know that the Patrician, Septimulius, offered it to the Consul Lucius Opimius, having first poured into it molten lead, in order to obtain a more valuable reward. O Romans, ye then saw poised in the balance, against its weight of gold, the head of

that young man, who was more your child than mine; and, by the self-same act, you beheld a reward conferred upon atrocities, and upon fraud."

The shade of Caius, disturbed at this dreadful news, trembled like the wind, murmuring through a cave. But Emilianus, still anxious to have his doubts dispelled, thus replied:—

"But why thus only persist in deploring the misdeeds of the seditious Plebeians? Is there no one here present who knows, or has at least the courage to relate the rumours of fame with respect to my murderers?" He stopt, and awaited with gravity some answer. Then I heard a mingled sound of low whispers, and it seemed as if some of the ghosts were about to come forward, and reveal the fatal secret, whilst others appeared to keep them back, by placing their hands upon their lips. Then I saw a fugitive ghost making haste, as if anxious to withdraw itself from the multitude. Its aspect was that of a timid female, who, for farther concealment, covered herself with her veil. But a spectre following, caught her by her dishevelled hair, re-

moved her veil, and, showing to Emilianus her expressive countenance, exclaimed,

"Look here, do you not recognize her?" He suddenly cried out, "Oh my consort! O Sempronia! wherefore dost thou fly me, and why that appearance of downcast wretchedness?" With wrath then replied the Spectre who detained her, "Because in those days there was current a rumour, that she had displayed herself that night which proved thy last, more the sister of the Gracchi than thy wife. She therefore was flying, being stung by the consciousness of her crime."

Whilst he thus spoke, the lady shook her head, and attempted to withdraw her locks from the grasp of his hand. But in vain—for the spectre compressing them still more resolutely, frowning, fixed on her his scowling eyes. She with downcast looks scarcely summoned courage for a moment to raise up her eyes to behold her husband, and inmediately dropt them again as if his sight were painful to her. The whole assembly were plunged in sorrowful silence, when Emilianus lifted his hand to his forehead in demonstration of his horror at this suspicion. He then

fixed his eyes on the spectre, who detained the lady, and recognizing him, exclaimed :—

" Oh my beloved Lælius ! then thou still retainest for me thy delightful and almost fraternal affection ?" He in his gladness released the matron, extended his right hand, and answered, " Virtue is immortal !" Then looking towards the lady, as she wildly fled, added, " Now learn that that woman then survived thee, but her life was overclouded by the most disgraceful suspicions, that she had been in that dark tragedy, the cruel instrument of the Plebeian conspiracy. Even now she did not dare to lift on thee her treacherous eyes, nor to open her deceitful lips, nor to support thy presence. O fatal race ! Neither wert thou, Caius, exempt from the suspicion of having been an accomplice in that dreadful work of darkness : Nor wert thou, Cornelia, albeit of illustrious reputation, altogether free from these odious imputations."

At these words the matron becoming still more melancholy, requested silence with her right hand, and fixing her eyes on Emilianus, with a look of intrepidity, thus began : " Assuredly I know not, O my Quirites, which of our lots is the

most lamentable; mine, that I should lie under such a foolish calumny, or yours, that you should live in such a sad state of corruption, that your outrages should at length extend even to Cornelia. I, highly exalted, and exposed to general observation, was a splendid instance of the greatest decorum of manners and purest innocence of life. My internal sentiments were openly displayed in my physiognomy; nor was there, in all those bold bad times, any one who dared openly to publish respecting me such vile opinions. Thus there were around me, even during my lattermost years, and in the solitude in which they were spent, the most esteemed citizens, and by common and general respect, I was considered as the mother of you all.

"Behold now are removed all motives for concealing the truth: here every one may manifest most freely the virtues or vices of his past life. If I ever had any participation in thy mysterious death, instead of denying it here, should I not be glad rather to avow it as a deed beneficial to our liberty? But not with fraud, nor in the shadow of night, would Cornelia have accomplished any such illustrious vengeance; but in the sight

of you all, of the earth itself, nay, of the whole universe."

She ceased, and looked proudly around her to see if any one made a motion to accuse her. But a reverential stillness showed the general opinion entertained of her innocence, until a voice thus broke forth:—

"O daughter of Africanus, thy virtue rises towards Heaven like a rock, beneath whose summit vainly rage the tempests of calumny!"

Then Lælius continued, "Magnanimous lady, that affection well known to you all, which in life I bore towards that constellation of our country, makes me still grieved at his barbarous death, now that the memory of that cruel event has been thus renovated in my mind. But here, where all deception would be unavailing, that silence of the multitude would be alone thy defence, even if thine own voice had not been already victorious."

While they were thus talking, the shade of Caius disappeared, as if avoiding this trial of truth. The mother beheld his flight with grief, and with diminished confidence, appeared to regard Tiberius with a painful look of suspicion. But he

with humbled look and in silence showed that neither his eloquence nor fraternal affection availed in defending the cause of rebellion. Wherefore, the Dictator, with a sarcastic smile, turning himself towards Brutus, rejoined, "Consider if such a state of corrupt anarchy can be called liberty?"

He answered, "Well mayest thou be pleased at having been called into existence, in a country exhausted by vices, because, in such a one, thine own found daily exercise, prompt occasions and opportunities already prepared. But hadst thou lived in the more moderate times of civil equality, thy mind would have been better tutored, constituted, and trained to endure it."—"Thou art mistaken," answered Cæsar, "because I should certainly have aspired to surpass all men in glory, although not in power. I unsheathed my sword not to oppress Pompey, but to avoid being oppressed by him. What then I might have been in an enlightened age, appears from what I was in a benighted one. Because, where cruelty was applauded, clemency derided, vengeance thought necessary, I moderated with mercy and humanity my good fortune. For, if I have

cause to repent myself of any virtue, it is of that which exalts a man towards divinity,—the disposition to pardon. Sylla, stained with civil blood, lived to a good old age, secure and unmolested, in the repose of a country life: Whilst I, always sparing of your blood, and prodigal of my own, was murdered by ungrateful countrymen!"

So saying, he fixed his eyes upon Brutus, with a look bordering on anger. The latter seemed to feel the reproach implied, and this fresh allusion to former acts would have rekindled anew their ancient hostilities, had not Tullius, interposing, said:—

"Peace, O illustrious rivals! Much am I grieved to observe, that even here the greatest souls amongst us are still unappeased. Although somewhat different in sentiments and conduct, yet ye were both marvellous; the one for a certain severe and almost divine virtue in the midst of general corruption; and the other by his goodness, when possessed of absolute power. Although the possession of liberty would have been more noble, yet, assuredly, the power of the Dictator was mild,—call him tyrant if you will, but surely of all tyrants he was the best. So that as

there never was a more honourable citizen than Brutus, so never was there a despot in the summit of his prosperity more moderate than Cæsar. Wherefore, ye both bequeathed to the world an incredible example in contrary ways, of the excellence of your natures. The one remaining the only torch of virtue, in the general night of vice; the other launched into a vast ocean of blood and crime, preserved himself as innocent as was possible, in so exalted a station."

Upon these words pronounced by the orator, with a mildness suited to moderate their mutual resentments, each appeared pacified; so much during life had they both admired the powers of his splendid elocution. As the clouds are dispersed by the breath of the zephyr, so every trace of passion disappeared from their countenance. The Dictator was the first to extend his victorious right hand, and Brutus then covered his face with the hem of his toga, as if concealing from the other the pity which he felt. Tullius, who had never before seen on that austere countenance any marks of soft feelings, was ready to shed tears of delight and complacency, on observing these effects of his oratory.

The multitude, who had been looking on in silence, burst forth in strains of commiseration, resembling the noise of the sea when heard at a distance. As to myself, I felt tears of pity trickle down my cheeks, at beholding the emotions of these gallant spirits, at such lofty excitements. When Cicero, on a sudden, said to me, with an affecting sadness, "Now the world turns this hemisphere towards the rays of the sun, and we are constrained to follow to the shadows of night, in an opposite direction."

While he was thus speaking, all the other spectres vanished like mist;—his own voice seemed to falter, in pronouncing the last words, and, as if compelled to fly by the influence of a celestial power, he disappeared,—whilst I remained, with aching eyes and palpitating heart, in the midst of darkness. I was scarcely conscious to myself whether I was dreaming or waking, living or dead. The various speeches, the innumerable ghosts, still kept my mind in wonder, and excited emotions of pity in my breast. Then I grieving, because abandoned by these generous spirits, and uncertain of again beholding and hearing them, in accents of supplication began to invoke them,

But my unavailing complaints were re-echoed back only by their inexorable tombs. Turning, therefore, my dubious footsteps, and groping my way amongst the heaps of bones which crumbled beneath my feet, I again beheld the vaulted heaven. Already had Aurora extended her rosy veil to the western breeze, which ruffled it with its balmy breath, forerunning the triumphal light of the sun. It was delightful to respire the fresh atmosphere, at again emerging from the subterraneous darkness.

Betaking myself back then to my abode, I lay down oppressed with fatigue. But my mind, during my slumbers, continued to busy itself about these images, now became the sole tyrants of all my thoughts.

NIGHT SECOND.

NIGHT SECOND.

CONFERENCE FIRST.

Marius, still full of Wrath, relates the Adventures of his disastrous Flight.

GREAT and extraordinary adventures so overpower all the faculties of the mind, that they usurp over it an overwhelming dominion. Hence the incredible prodigies of which I had been the sole witness, disquieted my mind, at the same time that they filled my imagination with delightful reveries. Dismissing all thoughts of the present times, my soul flitted back into past ages. The affairs of the present life appeared to me only like dreams, and the common language of men abject in comparison with those images and rea-

sonings which yet kept floating and re-echoing before my organs of sound and vision. How painful is it to remain silent respecting any stupendous event, which weighs like a heavy burthen upon the breast; but to reveal it to another, is an office no less agreeable to the relater than to the listener. And, as the drinking of sea-water assuages not thirst, but even increases the sense of burning in the throat, thus I suffered a more intense wish to behold anew the apparitions, now that I had tasted the marvellous delights of a first interview.

And although such a wish was with me of long standing, nevertheless I had restrained it, considering it as mere vanity. But now it had, from indulgence, become insatiable and tormenting; so that at present, instead of any vain fears, my only dread was lest the first night of these long-wished for conferences might also have proved the last. By which thoughts propelled, as by a wave, I watched eagerly the progress of the sun on his course, and awaited with impatience his descent into the ocean. At length, the darkness of evening spread itself over the fields and the face of Heaven, and I was delight-

ed in my anxiety to return to these monuments.

Foolish wish, since each irrevocable day only leads us somewhat nearer to the tomb! Thus, the corroding cares of our minds make us desirous of destroying that, the loss of which we ever afterwards lament,—our time. But when the light of Heaven had departed, I anxiously descended into these recesses, in expectation of new wonders. I stood, as I believe, with my eyes glazed; with my hair like that of Medusa; with a countenance as pallid as one who hears his sentence of death, invoking the Spectres. But long and vainly had my voice resounded through that musky solitude; so that now despairing, I was dubiously retracing my steps along these dark avenues, when, on a sudden, I beheld the usual flashing of the phosphorescent light; and the Spectres already were suddenly assembling themselves, joined by a numberless crowd of newly arisen ghosts; amongst whom I, with pleasure, recognized my Tullius, who, coming towards me, said,—

"Hail, courteous descendant, who feelest admiration and pity for us, as is manifest by thy

noble confidence, inducing thee first to penetrate here, and now to return. Already that troublesome weakness, which makes the living fear the dead, seems to have quitted thy breast. Thou perceivest that we are incorporeal, not given to offend either by nature or disposition, that material substance in which thou art clothed, and which, (after that short sleep, called life,) being dissolved into dust, thou shalt remain as we now are, of the purest element. Thou shalt then feel how puerile is that fear which men commonly feel of us, who are but the finest substance of the human body. For these decaying members, the sport of death, are not thy real essence; but that faculty by which we reason and think, are glad and sorrowful, and which is constantly inducing thee to aspire after supreme felicity. It would then be more consonant to reason, that we should feel some repugnance at you than you at us; because to intelligences, volatile, uncontrolled, and pure, the dulness of your thoughts, incumbered as they are with the weight of frail mortality, is irksome."

He ceased, and I humbly replied:—

"O! admirable Consul, and still more won-

derful orator, so great is my delight at seeing and hearing thee, that, instead of fearing thy aspect or thy voice, I gladly would encounter many dangers to converse with thee, and, under thy guidance, to become acquainted with those illustrious shadows, and enjoy their lofty sentiments.

"But tell me who is that large and powerful ghost, who, with threatening aspect and fierce eyes, advances so formidably, although silent and unarmed?" And Tullius made answer:—

"Thou beholdest a great and cruel spirit, in which it is difficult to decide, whether one ought most to praise his valour, or blame his atrocity; that is Caius Marius, who triumphed over Jugurtha, and the Cimbri, and of whose fame I should conceive even thou must have heard."

I then turned my eyes, anxious to behold the true image of so valiant and fearful a Roman. Just then he afforded me a better opportunity of regarding him, by making an authoritative and disdainful sign with his right hand, for the vulgar ghosts to recede from before his majestic presence. They, rushing like water-brooks, gave way with

respectful wonder. When, behold, Marius, with a fierce voice, began:—

"And where art thou now, Julius Cæsar, who so lately didst disturb the silence of death, by accusing the acts of my just vengeance? I knew thee but as a child, and great is now my indignation, that thou shouldst presume to insult my glory, who, when living, was called the new founder of Rome!" Cæsar haughtily approached, and said:—

"Behold I am here to listen to thee." Marius beheld him with ferocious eyes, and apparently restraining with difficulty his indignation, thus proceeded:—

"A country like this, so guilty of blood, could only be expiated by blood. Sylla entered it as into a city taken by assault; and I, abandoned by your baseness, was constrained to fly. There alone remained with me Geranias, my son-in-law, with whom I reached Ostia, where, with a prosperous wind, I embarked. But the heaven, as if in rivalry with my unstable fortune, soon exchanged its serenity for a tempest. Shortly the inexorable whirlwinds impelled my ship upon the shores of Italy, as if desirous of yielding me up

a prey to the satellites of Sylla, who were tracking me like bloodhounds in quest of a wild beast. I, glorious for my bypast perils, the terror of the barbarians, the defender of Italy, in which the fame of my achievements ought to have collected hosts of followers to admire me, and support my cause, then reduced to fly even from thence like a pursued criminal, and to confide my safety in a leaky skiff, avoided the shores of my native land, which were covered with traitors. But cruel fortune obliged the mariners to seek for shelter on the coast of Circeeum. There I remained like a melancholy instance of the sport of destiny. The sea was roaring in rage; faithless was the dry land, and fatal the sky. I, pining from hunger, and wandering about on the desert sands, alternately feared, and longed to encounter some human beings. Not to meet them was desolation; to encounter them was almost certain destruction. Thus, while I dragged my slow and weary steps along the stormy beach, I, by chance, fell in with some husbandmen, whose pity (for they knew me) induced them to acquaint me that the coast was beset with numerous straggling parties, lying in ambush to kill me. And although it caused

my blood to boil in my veins, that, after having spilt the greatest portion of it for the glory of Rome, my life should have been sold for a high price to traitors; yet was I treated with wonderful kindness by these men, who might, by means of my death, have raised themselves from their miserable poverty; which they even lamented as the cause why they were not able to comfort and refresh my languid limbs. Wherefore, I buried myself amidst the forests of that coast, an outcast from civil society. I took refuge in savages' life. Night now overcast the face of the heavens, which I only perceived, at short intervals, some glimpses from amongst the leaves. For my eyes, wearied with long watching and misfortunes, were still kept awake by my burning indignation. The stormy wind in its gusts shook the forest, howling through the entwined branches, and tearing up from their roots, and laying low the more lofty and aged oaks. I heard the wolves howling around me, either from hunger, or dread of the elements, and listened to the rustling of the dried heaps of leaves, as they were moved by the snakes which went hissing over them. But let not these my miseries move your pity; because,

as a warrior, victory had always been more grateful to me than life. Only imagine to yourselves the anguish of my mind, the rage of my heart, and my bitter repinings against my fortune, and your base ingratitude, which had driven me forth, exposed to all the bickerings of such a tempest. At length the morning led me forth from these thickets, determined to oppose myself to my cruel destiny. Inspired by vengeance solely, I advanced along the beach towards Minturnum, where I immediately fell in with my indefatigable persecutors, the soldiers of Sylla. I dashed into the sea, and immediately swam towards two ships, at no great distance, in order to shelter myself there. My heavy, aged, and unwieldy limbs, scarcely performed their office, so that I was in danger of being drowned.

"In the meantime, I heard the assassins on the shore offering up their cruel vows to Neptune and Nereus, that they might overwhelm me in the waves; and invoking even voracious monsters of the deep, whilst, with their rude ribaldry, they scoffed at my painful anxiety. Then they threatened the mariners if they gave me shelter; and offered them rewards if they would refuse to

relieve me. At length their feelings of humanity prevailed; I was picked up, and received on board. Still these barbarians did not cease exclaiming, from the shore, that they should thrust me overboard into the sea. So that I, the subduer of so many nations, became reduced to the dreadful humiliation of submissively imploring these Plebeian men, in their wretched skiff; at the same time making known to them my illustrious name, and my ignominious fortune. At length their reverence for me prevailing, they boldly replied to those on the shore, that they would not comply with their ferocious request; and, unmooring, abandoned their vessel to the wind. Afterwards steering towards the mouth of the river Liris, they entered it, and anchored. I landed and rested myself on the tranquil green sward of the river-side; but short was my refreshment; for, on a sudden, I observed the bark under sail, whilst I remained mute on the beach, quite overwhelmed by this new act of treachery. For afraid that it might be reputed a high crime to have felt any compassion for me, the sailors, repenting them of it, had abandoned me, like some fatal cargo. I, though oppressed, yet un-

subdued by these increasing misfortunes, wandered away amidst slimy marshes and deep ditches, till I at length reached the hut of an aged countryman, who, recognising me by my likenesses, often seen during triumphs, although obscured by the miseries I had suffered, was moved at my wretched state, and concealed me in a cave, covering me with sea-weed and reeds. Thus, Marius, at whose very aspect the most fierce nations had taken flight, remained with beating heart under this vile covering. But what canst not thou effect, O luckless fortune?

"Shortly thereafter my pursuers arrived, and I then heard them talking with my compassionate host, attempting to bribe him to reveal where he had concealed *the enemy of the Romans!* Oh! infamous words, which I myself heard, buried in that disgraceful cavity, and at which I should have died with indignation, had I not determined to live for revenge?

"Thereafter, the better to elude these blood-hounds, I plunged myself into the waters of an adjoining marsh, so that my naked head only remained above them, which I sheltered amongst low willows. But in vain; for being discovered

in a short time, I was conducted in pomp, like a wild beast taken by hunters, and brought naked to Minturnum, where I was delivered over to the Prætor. But, no intelligence ever awakened in my breast so much wonder and fury, as when I then heard that, by a decree of the Senate, I, like some execrable monster, was to be condemned to death by any judge who might lay hold of me, and cast me into prison.

"Whilst, then, the Prætor, from his seat, pronounced that unjust sentence, I, immured in a dark cell, was awaiting the disgraceful close of my glorious life. So great, however, is the splendour of revered virtue, even during the obscurity of fortune, that there was not one man to be found in all Minturnum who dared to become my executioner. At length a Cimbrian slave presented himself, who, remembering the rivers of blood of his people which I had shed, entered deliberately to take vengeance. I beheld in the dusky air of that confined place the brandishing of his sword, and, although quite unarmed and dispirited, yet, with this voice, once so formidable in the field, I exclaimed,—'Dost thou, then, O

traitor, dare to lift up thy arm against Caius Marius?'

"At the sound of these words he, as vile as cruel, dropt his sword and fled, trembling and uttering feeble cries. He narrated afterwards, with all the superstition of a barbarian, that, in that moment of time, my eyes shone in the dark like constellations, and that my voice had a divine and marvellous sound. Thus that sense of pity, which in every heart almost was now extinguished by vile slavery, was then awakened by this stupid reason: for this prodigy, as narrated by the idiot slave, was of more avail than all my triumphs, and so discouraged the Judge, that he, dreading the vengeance of the Deities, if he should destroy a man who was their care, left me free to the disposal of my destiny. I was then placed in a ship with fishermen and pilots, who were ordered to conduct me wherever I should order them; whilst the citizens, assembled on the beach, implored pardon from the Gods for driving me forth, being constrained, by cruel necessity, not to give shelter to so perilous a guest. I turned the prow to the opposite shore of Lybia, but tyrannical fortune again drove me

back upon Sicily. Scarcely were my footsteps impressed upon that shore, when I was discovered and pursued. I again betook myself to the sea, and the wind transported me to Carthage. Surely that shore ought to have resounded with the fame of my exploits, but the first voice I heard was the intimation of Jestilius, the Prætor there, which forebade me to remain. To me the sport of constant misfortunes, and chased from every shore, the whole earth was now become unhospitable, and every sea tempestuous, and I stood mute, contemplating the ruins of fallen Carthage, as a mirror of fortune; and I, who thus overthrew them, was an example of its inconstancy. That city, before our times queen of the universe, now lay, like a mighty skeleton, the sport of the whirlwind. I, Marius, sat upon its stones despised, squalid, with a price set upon my head. No words could equal my desperate and dreadful thoughts—my lips were compressed in silence. Proceeding onwards, with a bursting heart, along the scorching sands, lo, on a sudden, I encountered my son. He had been, a short time before, surprised and made captive by the King of Numidia; and, having been so fortunate

as to escape, had set out in quest of me, prompted by the most anxious affection. Even to the beasts of the field are the natural affections a source of comfort, and greatest amidst the extremity of evils; so to me, thus deprived of all hope, this was a most unlooked-for happiness. But, even this pleasure was not unmixed with much of the bitterness of regret. He beheld a father, who had hitherto passed a life of splendid achievements, now a wandering beggar, without a country or home, without praise, without shelter, without even a tomb. Arrived upon the very brink of which, we had here met together to utter unavailing complaints, and to whom I could only bequeath the sad inheritance of my misfortunes, and the hatred of the conscript tyrants. So that we expected every moment to be both treacherously captured, and become mutual spectators of each other's ignominious death. But when, as, amidst the horror of shipwreck, while even the pilot stands aghast, the winds become suddenly propitious, so was I then comforted by an unhoped-for message, that Rome, in its fickleness, lamented my misfortunes. This excited me to attempt anew glorious perils. I

ever, indeed, had been ready to court them, but was still more so after my late abject state, and I again abandoned myself to all the flatteries of fortune. Having arrived in Italy, I there found, not only friends to receive me, but avengers; so that having, in a short time, assembled an army, and, having reached these walls, I purified them with a just rigour, after your atrocious ingratitude."

CONFERENCE SECOND.

Sylla and Brutus dispute about the Manner in which they both deported themselves towards their Country; and Cæsar then draws the Comparison between Clemency and Atrocity.

Marius was silent, but anger flashed from his eyes, when Cæsar calmly replied :—" Peace, indignant soul. Thou beholdest here, perchance, innumerable spirits whom thou huntedst down, yet these remain in reverent silence at thy threatening aspect. Alas! if they may not even complain of thee, at least do not thou boast of the frightful massacres, during which thou satiatedst thy vengeance with such copious streams of blood !"

Marius seemed then to moderate his cruelty,

like a wild beast who is caressed. He then extended his hand in a friendly manner to the Dictator, when there arose a hubbub of words from all parts of these recesses, a mixed confusion of terror and wonder. I then heard the crowd in low whisperings pronounce, "Sylla, Sylla Cornelius, Sylla." Then a dismal-looking Spectre advanced, with a tardy pace. The rabble, in humble guise, left a wide space open for his passage. He was clothed in a coat of mail, and his armour glittered on his broad breast. His eyes were blue and fierce; his countenance ferocious, and somewhat ruddy from a scorbutic humour. He stood in the very midst of the throng, and cast around him his glaring eyeballs. His chin was elevated, as if in demonstration of the high opinion he entertained of himself, and of the manner in which he depreciated others. When Marius heard that fatal name pronounced, he fled anew, as he had done in his lifetime, withdrawing himself suddenly from my sight.

Cornelius fiercely smiled, and then, with a deep and slow voice, thus commenced:—"Who may there be amongst you, ye herd of timid Spectres, without fame, who now presumes to do

that which he did not dare to do during my lifetime—to demand of me the reasons of my government? Ye then there beheld me, confiding solely in my greatness of mind, and begirt only with the splendour of my achievements, lay down in the forum my dictatorship, and dismiss all my Lictors, who had only cut off your unworthy heads, and remain there intrepid, unarmed, ready to render ye an account of every drop of blood. Ye were still, Romans, the occasion and the season were favourable to attacking me; all vengeance was easy, it was granted to any one: the blows were still recent, Sylla, vulnerable as well as mortal. No one had then sufficient breath in his trembling lips to chide me."

He spoke, and was then silent, leaning his right hand against his side, and his left on the hilt of his formidable sword. When lo, Marcus Brutus, issuing swiftly from the multitude, exclaimed:—"Answer, ferocious Sylla, who gave thee power to exterminate a hundred thousand Romans?"

The other, with grave severity, replied:—"Who art thou, who speakest so haughtily?"

"I am," he rejoined, "of the glorious race of Junius Brutus, enemy of tyrants such as thee; and if I had lived when thou oppressed this suffering country, she, perhaps, might not have remained unvindicated."

Cornelius stood in pensive silence, then fixed his eyes upon him, and said:—"But in what manner?"

The other quickly answered:—"In the same manner as every magnanimous citizen ought to combat the oppressors of his native country!"

"But how," repeated Sylla, "what wouldst thou have said, when I resigned the tremendous power, inclined my head to the indignation of the vulgar without any other defence than myself?"

Brutus replied:—"Exactly that which I asked thee just now, by what right thou didst put to death one hundred thousand Romans?"

"By that," answered Cornelius, "by which it is competent to the good to punish destructive vices. To save a country in its last agonies, every remedy was provided that was necessary. But I did not depart from the usages of the state; for I was created Dictator by free suf-

frages. But what avails it to mention legimate customs, since it is notorious, that in Rome, then for a long time overthrown by the rashness of the Plebeian tribunes, no one any longer understood what or where was their native country, or what constituted a citizen, since there was no longer to be perceived even the shadow of their ancient virtues? It is impossible to correct those who are hardened in vice except by means of terror; and yet, I was constrained to prevail over an infinite multitude of bad and vicious persons. But had I lived when goodness was useful and venerated, thou shouldst have known in a different way the greatness of my soul; of which there exists a proof in the commencement of my enterprises. For when I entered dreaded into this city of Rome, I retained my victorious squadrons in such strict discipline, that your properties and lives were inviolate. I then undertook to reform your corrupt practices, by the ordinary and moderate means. But your general perfidy soon undeceived me, and forced me to have recourse to the sword; which I made use of, as being best adapted to such an extreme of evil. And when I reposed my weary hand upon its hilt,

I was not afraid to offer myself to your opinion; —the silence of admiration has for ever absolved me."

Marcus then with loud voice broke forth:— "Unheard of audacity is thine, to call the country guilty, and thyself an excellent corrector of it. One single citizen, such as thou wert, was sufficient to deprave any well ordered city, and to debase it in a short time to a state of misery and slavery. We certainly are deserving of thy sarcasms and axes, because we suffered the former, and bent down our necks most vilely to the latter! All human reason must have been lost amongst us, when the licence was given to thee, to put a price upon our lives. Thy former wickedness continues immortal in thee, since thou still darest to praise thyself for what thou shouldst be abhorred. Hence I conclude assuredly, that tyranny must needs extinguish every vestige of reason; so that the oppressor, like a bloated tiger, laps up the blood which remains on his lips, after he has devoured his prey; and the oppressed either no longer know the eternal light of justice, or fear to behold it. But, if any one had arisen in the Forum, on that day in which, confiding in

the general depravity, thou didst resign thy sanguinary dignity, and had called thee to account for a murdered father, or for property confiscated, it would have been known then, of what avail were thy haughty speeches, in defence of innumerable atrocities; because the passing sentence of death, after a regular trial, and according to universal laws, is always an act of grave deliberation, in which every well ordered mind is perplexed; whilst thou, on the contrary, ordered the massacre of such multitudes with a joyful countenance, and with no other rule, than thy own cruel will. The sword of justice ought to be raised with trembling, to shed even one drop of blood,—and yet, thou believest that thou wert not stained with infamy, by the shedding of whole torrents? Then go, ferocious and haughty shadow, here thou dost not talk in the Comitia to a debased populace, but to a citizen, who slew a tyrant, and thereafter killed himself, that he might not live in slavery."

Cornelius replied with cold and tardy voice, displaying, at the same time, by his countenance, a bitter irony:—

"Magnificent truly are thy words, O Spectre!

I know not if they are as valiant as audacious, but it ill becomes thee to boast of having laid low the tyrant, if afterwards thou wert constrained in a short time to descend with him here below.' And who was he?" Brutus then stretched forth his right hand, pointing out Julius Cæsar, and answered, "Behold him whom I put to death, and yet he was much the better."

Sylla turning himself towards him, immediately recognized him, and said:—

"O Brutus! behold how fitting was my severity, and how pernicious all clemency. I condemned this man during the proscription, but the prayers of several gave me so much vexation, that I revoked his sentence. Nevertheless, I predicted to the Romans, that in him they preserved their own destruction, because in such a man the wickedness of many Mariuses was assembled."

Brutus with severity added:—"A marvellous action is this that thou, raving, cut down with thy tremendous sickle such an untold multitude of citizens, amongst whom one avenger of his country might have been hoped for, should have reserved for it this one, who was destined to be its op-

pressor. So that this only time, when thou wert merciful, thou causedst it incalculable mischief."

Cæsar at these words, somewhat grieved, exclaimed, turning to Brutus:—

"Now then peace!" He was silent, and Cæsar turning himself towards Cornelius, continued:—"O cruel proscriber, insatiable in blood! Thy government, that frightful instrument of celestial wrath, had for its ensign terror and death. Mine was acquired with magnanimous valour, and maintained with mercy! To thee it was agreeable to behold the pallid countenance of the Romans, trembling at thy awful presence, while to me it was only pleasant to see in their aspect an unreserved confidence and a joyful assurance. No person would have touched thy exterminating hand, whilst this my hand, pure from proscriptions, guiltless of treachery, and only an object of fear to the enemies of Rome, extended with kindness and hospitality to the Quirites, and it was by them embraced with cordiality and affection."

Sylla, with a ferocious grin, replied:—"Weakly dost thou applaud thyself for having treated with bounty such evil spirits, who still boast of having

betrayed thee. With better reason, I am pleased at my own severities, by which I rendered myself secure, and the people submissive. It may please thee to have been kind to traitors, and to have tried a fatal experiment. I am pleased at having formed an opposite opinion, and the event has shown which of the two was the better. Go, silly man! Pretend not to instruct Sylla in the means of governing these reptiles, for me, although reeking in their own blood, they obeyed, feared, and admired; but thee they overwhelmed in thine own."

So saying, he looked fiercely around, and then, with a threatening voice, exclaimed:—

"Whoever presumes to blame my dictatorship, speak; I listen to him prepared to enter upon its defence."

There was a general silence amongst the multitude, as if they had heard a clap of thunder. He stood in a ferocious attitude, as if awaiting who should interrupt the stillness, and seeing that no one spoke, after regarding Brutus with a bitter smile, he vanished into the air.

Then a Spectre mocking the fugitive, "Thou hast reasoned as was befitting the heir of a cour-

tezan." The surrounding multitude laughed loudly at that sentence. Hearing which, I recollected that Sylla actually had been appointed heir to the wealthy Nicopolis, a woman to whom that ignominious title was well suited. Then many remembered how Sylla had given orders, in his last will, that his corpse should be consumed on a funeral-pile, although, till then, it had been the custom amongst his ancestors to have their remains preserved with aromatics; because he was afraid that his detested body might be torn to pieces by the rage of the populace. So that scarcely had the tremendous Cornelius disappeared, when various dialogues commenced, many shadows then discovering their opinions, which a little before they kept concealed. Wherefore, I tacitly considered to what a degree an exalted and extraordinary tyranny, by its audacious means, villifies the minds of those who are held under its influence; so that even a dread of it should remain impressed on their minds after such a lapse of ages. This populace, so mute and terrified at the aspect of Sylla, now insulted with ribaldry his absurd vengeance.

Thus the birds become mute in the thickets

at the appearance of the devouring falcon; but scarcely does he withdraw, when, suddenly, bold and glad, they warble forth their various songs. But the higher shades still remained as at first in sorrowful silence, apparently withheld by no other motive than their repugnance to converse with one who was a scoffer of every virtue.

CONFERENCE THIRD.

Bold and severe Censure of a Spirit, who, when living amongst the Romans, was one of the mildest of Men, upon the Injustice of their Actions.

WHILST the crowd were thus wrangling, methought I heard the murmur as if of fountains during the stillness of night. For all tongues were now hushed, and all looks directed towards a ghost, who, with a serene countenance, now advanced; towards whom immediately ran up Tullius and Cæsar, and Brutus and Antonius, all extending to him their arms, and appearing equally rejoiced at again beholding him. His aspect expressed venerable benevolence, and a delightful probity of morals. His temples were bald, his hair grey, his eyes soft and merciful, his forehead placid and calm, his lips cheerful.

With marks of affection, yet tempered with a polite gravity of demeanour, he embraced the surrounding ghosts, courteously addressing each individual by name; and after these first offices of friendship had been fulfilled, the whole party remained for some time mute, when Brutus thus began:—

"Thy private life was no doubt innocently and happily spent in a peaceful fulfilment of domestic duties, and delightful intercourse with the muses; while, at the same time, many persons were beholden to thee for offices of great generosity and friendship. Whence, being acceptable to all, because an object of suspicion to no faction, thou wert enabled, during those perilous times, to lead quietly a long and respected life. But, for my own part, I regret that such a pilot as thou might'st have been during our civil tempests, instead of directing us in such a state of peril, should have taken shelter in harbour, and thence beheld, as a mere spectator, our country overwhelmed in the abyss of corruption."

The bold freedom of these opinions seemed to be rather unacceptable to the bystand-

ers, some of whom I observed making signs to Brutus not to persist in that strain. But the spectre to whom they were addressed thus placidly answered:—

"Could I have hoped that, by attempting any generous enterprise, I might have imparted comfort to my native country, I should assuredly have launched myself into the midst of the raging billows. But the opinions which I entertained of the inevitable destiny of Rome were exactly the same which had been imbibed by those excellent Patricians, Rutilius and Cotta, at least twelve lustres preceding my death, when, being unable either to suffer or to correct the city, they quitted it in disgust, and went into voluntary exile. Thou thyself, O constellation of eloquence, and treasure of philosophy, Marcus Tullius, persecuted by triumphant vice, abandoned by the good, not protected even by thy own virtues, wert constrained to seek safety in exile—a necessity painful to thyself, and disgraceful to our country; and after thy return, didst thou not pass thy life in a continual state of perplexity, investigating the best methods of reforming it, but unable to discover any? and we know that

all thy fruitless efforts only led to despair; because, when thou beheldest Pompey overthrown, thou openly gavest utterance to that opinion, that it was not only expedient to lay down, but even to break the sword; which sentiment having at one time been uttered in the hearing of Pompey's son, he unsheathed his sword, and would have pierced thee, had he not been prevented by Cato, who was present at the debate: No one, therefore, after that is entitled to call in question my opinion, except thee, O Brutus, who administered to Rome in its agony the last but inefficacious remedy."

"You two," interrupted Tullius, "attained the highest fame, by opposite paths. One of you was universally considered as a wonderful instance of moderate conduct during a period fatal to every virtue, when the fierce goadings of ambition induced the great majority to overthrow the institutions of their country, you stood as if on the pinnacle of a mountain, above the reach of the clouds. The other, with an illustrious daring, hoped, by sacrificing the life of one individual, to put an end to a general and inveterate system of wickedness."

" Whoever despairs," added Brutus, " of the public safety, and abandons it, sets up a pernicious example, like one who withdraws from the ranks during an engagement. A true citizen should only live as long as his country exists; for he ought not to survive the grief of its loss. And besides, to pass sentence of death on it, is repugnant to the usual probability of all human vicissitudes, which, although perpetually varying, yet testify clearly, that although sometimes the fairest expectations terminate in disappointment, yet, on the other hand, the most imminent perils are sometimes averted. I, therefore, did not stand on the shore, and look calmly on the tempest of Rome; but in attempting to buffet the waves, was overwhelmed in the general shipwreck." Then the placid ghost replied:—

" Even if the revolutions of states could be accomplished without future calamities, equal to, or greater than those grievances which actually occasion them, then I would not have desisted from mingling in state transactions. But by me there was not shed one drop of blood; while by thee it was spilt in torrents, and in vain. My example, assuredly, was not fatal, for it was fol-

lowed but by few; whilst thine, on the contrary, awakened in the breast of tyrants the fear of treachery, the most fruitful source of all their atrocities."

Whilst this debate was carried on, I, stimulated by curiosity, approached Tullius, who was an attentive listener; and in order to excite his notice, according to human usage, I put forth my hand to his toga, with the intention of pulling it gently, but it eluded my grasp, and I, therefore, interrogated him as to the name of the last speaker. He answered, "Pomponius Atticus;" and I gladly added,—"We still read thy letters to him, filled with the warmest feelings of affection for thy unhappy country, and the most noble and exalted sentiments. In these, as in a sketch from the ablest pencil, are delineated the numerous vices and scanty virtues of thy times, insomuch, that the mind is actually transported thither. We, thy actual descendants, with such a guide, are able, not indifferently, to discourse of thy transactions with thee."

Tullius appeared delighted at being reminded by me of those volumes, and appeared about to enter into converse with me, when his atten-

tion was distracted by a new commotion amongst the Spectres, who were shaken to and fro, like a forest in the wind. He, therefore, placed his right-hand before my breast, and with his left kept off the surrounding apparitions. Then I heard from a distance a confused utterance of words, murmuring from the furthermost depth of the cave. And the crowd of ghosts became still greater and denser than before, coming forward in a dense tumultuous mass. A wonderful spectacle it was truly to behold them, floating in, like billows, beneath the foundations of their august native country. But as the whirlwind now shakes the pines upon the precipices, now calmly plays among the flowers of the valley, so, on the ceasing of uproar, the placid ghosts soon settled down into a peaceful stillness. I then saw five shades slowly drawing near, and turn upon the crowd their martial aspect. Their fixed eyes and intrepid features betokened the grandeur of their thoughts, and well-founded confidence.

In their front came that ghost whom I had seen the preceding night, of Scipio Emilianus, the destroyer of Carthage, and for that exploit,

denominated the Second Africanus. Whence I conjectured that the four which followed belonged to the same valiant race. But Tullius, already aware of my anxiety, and anticipating my request, pointing with his right-hand, commenced :—

" Behold, those who precede are the two brothers, renowned in arms, who fell in the remote fields of Iberia, Publius and Cneius Scipio, by whose splendid achievements the Roman name was carried to the extreme shores of the Western Ocean. Close to them are two other brothers, who alone could make up for the untimely death of the former. Of these, one is Lucius Cornelius, who triumphed over Antiochus the Great, King of Syria, and for that cause called Asiaticus. The other is Publius Cornelius, the conqueror of Hannibal in the battle of Zama, whereby he spread over Africa the terror of his name, and gained the title of the Greater Africanus. How mighty a tribute to glory thus to have obtained, by universal consent, such illustrious titles, by which the earth was allotted in portions to that race, as if it were a patrimony bequeathed to their stupendous virtue!

" They are both sons of that Publius who pre-

cedes them. Remark, how pleased he appears at having been the father of such a valiant pair!" For while Tullius was speaking, the father turned towards them his pensive looks, and then made a motion to the populace to behold them. Whilst I stood gazing, Tullius was silent, until I questioned him which of them was the greater Africanus; and he answered:—

"He on the right, with the bald forehead, on which you may distinctly perceive the scar of a wound, in which, during his lifetime, he gloried."

I then, looking attentively, perceived that glorious mark, which is also to be seen on his marble busts; and I remarked, that the apparition bore a striking resemblance to those. During our discourse, they had approached close to the tombs, and leaned against them in attitudes of sorrow. They then fixed their eyes (so often disdainful of death) on the surrounding shades, in scornful silence. But Emilianus stretched himself at full length along a sarcophagus, as if bewailing the perfidy of his last mortal night. But amongst a multitude of other reflections, this also arose, how it happened that Tullius, born so

many years after the death of the Scipios, could thus discover their resemblances, which perplexity being made known to him, he answered :—

" Not only Rome, but Italy, as well as all the provinces of our empire, knew from their marble statues, or painted portraits, these venerated heroes. Their monuments stood in our houses and forums, in our courts and museums, the grateful emblems rendered to their virtues, and as perpetual models for our imitation.

" Unfortunate, doubtless, should we have been, if we had been unacquainted with their countenances, because we lived in after ages. Wheresoever the likenesses of illustrious men are not preserved and honoured, then I should conceive that virtue awakens no joy in the heart, nor admiration and respect in the mind."

Whilst these sentences flowed from the hallowed lips of Tullius, Pomponius approaching, thus addressed him :—

" Look now, how, even in this nether world, illustrious deeds of evil usurp that praise which of right should only belong to acts of benevolence! Those apparitions who filled the abysses of death with their bloody achievements,—here still rever-

ed,—are regarded by the multitude with reverential awe. We, who sought for honourable fame, by means of moderate aspirings and useful learning,—we, who passed our lives in endeavouring to benefit mankind; nevertheless, as soon as these appear, are here left neglected and unregarded." Tullius, somewhat mortified, replied:—

"Alas! Pomponius, the pleasing gentleness of Athenian manners, and the delightful intercourse of the Muses, have perchance enfeebled in thee thy hardy Roman virtue, that thus thou speakest of it with such contempt?" And he placidly rejoined:—

"Now that we have resigned together with our mortal bodies our gross and earthly thoughts, it is befitting that we should reason with perfect freedom. If, when we were groping about amidst the delusions of mortal life, we ardently wished to elevate our thoughts to the contemplation of truth, shall we not freely expatiate in its glorious light, now that we have emerged from the darkness of human error?"

"My aspirings towards it," replied Tullius, "have been and still are unceasing. But this is its principal doctrine, that the love of our native

country is the source of all worthy and illustrious actions. Wherefore, it is with grief that I now hear thee utter such a contrary opinion."

"To love," said the other, "a country deserving all our affection, is a duty as easy as it is deservedly due. But to bear love to one that is barbarous, atrocious, depraved, and incorrigible, would be pure folly. Yet to hate it would be wickedness, and vanity to bewail it: Therefore, duly to know and appreciate it is real wisdom." Tullius hastily interrupted him:—

"But to what point art thou proceeding, O Atticus, formerly when amongst us so benign, but now so austere, with these thy indignant opinions?"

"To show thee," replied he, "what Rome was, when not viewed in the sanguinary splendour of its glory, not cried up by overpowering fame, but calmly judged by a mind no longer subjected to the yoke of human opinions. Behold, then, in an asylum of felons, its fatal origin! then a fratricide, succeeded by rape! I say nothing of the wars with Veii, and with Fidenæ, and with the Equi and the Volsci, and with all the surrounding people, undertaken on various

pretexts, and as successful as unjust. But afterwards, when the ferocious Tullius Hostilius destroyed Alba, the parent city of Rome, and then turned his arms against Latium with no better cause than the thirst of power, inexhaustible motives for vengeance were left to its latter descendants. For the Roman empire having now openly and shamelessly avowed its principles, the whole of the nations not only in its immediate neighbourhood, but throughout Italy, rose up in hostility against it. Wherefore, if she at first, from her own free will, had recourse to violence and injustice, she was subsequently constrained to pursue them from the necessity of fortune. For considering impartially the wars waged by our kings, we can only look upon them as the inflictions of divine vengeance, with which these regions were continually laid waste. After the expulsion of our kings, their lust of dominion remained like a fatal heritage to the Republic, which, like a deluge rising over all natural boundaries, spread universal desolation, becoming still greedier of new usurpations, the more it had been previously glutted.

"Not satisfied with acquiring territory, by deeds of arms, which is at least a generous mode

of committing evil, it carried on its usurpations by means of the most abominable frauds.

" Doubtless you perceive, that I now allude to that judgment worthy of perpetual ignominy, pronounced by the Roman people, when the Ardeates and the Aricini submitted to their arbitration, a controversy between themselves respecting a tract of land on their borders, whether it belonged to the former or the latter. For the sentence pronounced was, that it belonged to neither, but to the Roman people, who, intrepid in perfidy, immediately seized upon it.

" At the same time, it happened that war was raging between the Campani and the Samnites. And although the latter were, from solemn alliances, the friends of Rome, yet she (always guided by ambition) turned her arms against them, because invited so to do by the Campani, with very favourable conditions. But Rome, afterwards unfaithful both to one and the other, reduced them both under her dominion. Next, our boundless longings proceeding to the extremity of Italy, made us desirous of navigating, contrary to treaties, in the Gulf of the people of Tarentum. So that they, now convinced by the example of

others, how fatal the Roman standards ever were to whomsoever they approached, implored the assistance of Pyrrhus. That great monarch of Epirus experienced a destiny so unmerited to his generous efforts in so honourable a cause, that, after many daring exploits, he was conquered, and obliged to abandon Italy, which now remained completely subject to us, towards the fifth century from the foundation of Rome.

"And yet before our times, the greater part of Italy had been possessed by a flourishing brave and happy race of men, as we are informed by history. Of these Etruria was the most ancient people, illustrious beyond them all by its learning, and esteemed and respected for its proficiency in the arts;—but overwhelmed by our armies, it was suffered to remain like a skeleton buried in ruins, over which was only heard the renown of our fame. Capua, Tarentum, and Reggio, also were flourishing colonies of Greece, not only polished, but luxurious and rich, and celebrated for their pompous spectacles, and the peaceful urbanity of their manners. But the progress of Roman victories destroyed the arts and sciences, and every vestige of refinement in manners,

wherever they reached; and in their place substituted a ferocious contempt of every other discipline except that of bloodshed, rapine, and death. Italy then being subjugated, the rapacious Senate next began to study pretexts for extending their empire beyond it;—and soon found them certain adventurers called Mamertini, having introduced themselves into Messina as strangers and friends, had, after overpowering, sacked it, and deluging it in blood, seized upon the wives and daughters and property of its fugitive or murdered citizens, and revelled in the fruits of their atrocities. Nor contented only with such perfidious barbarity, they extended their rapine over the whole island.

"You may remember that, at that time, Sicily was an object of contest between the people of Carthage and Syracuse. Both, however, united together to hunt out the atrocious Mamertini, who, being unable to withstand their power, sought assistance from you:—you, with that promptitude with which you ought only to have protected the innocent, hastened on the invitation of these robbers. And thus you, having become the allies and accomplices of their villany, clearly display-

ed to the world, that your original and theirs was the same. Nevertheless, it seemed that the more iniquitous were your designs, the more successful were you in their accomplishment; for, after twenty-two years of what was denominated the first Carthaginian war, the whole of Sicily was reduced to a province of the Roman people. Thereafter, when a peace had scarcely been concluded with the Carthaginians, we, taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the occurrence of tumults in their island of Sardinia, made an unexpected attack upon and seized it with open treachery. We then turned our standards, breathing blood and ruin, towards Greece; but commenced its oppression under the magnificent pretext of supporting it against the overwhelming phalanxes of the King of Macedonia, who was constantly endeavouring to reduce that polished and graceful people under the iron sceptre of his tyranny,—that exterminating sceptre, the fatal inheritance of that Alexander, who, from the boundless effects of his madness, had been denominated the Great. But, behold the evil consequences which accrue to a weak oppressed people, from entrusting their protection to a

powerful nation. For the Romans, artfully insinuating themselves into all the affairs of Greece, at length ruled there with absolute sway; so that, when she afterwards attempted to resist the decrees of our Senate, she was like a rebel put down by force of arms.

"Thus we saw the beautiful and splendid Athens, marvellous from her divine works of art, and from the illustrious geniuses who had arisen in it, sacked two several times, partly burnt and destroyed, first by Sylla, and then by Celenus, the lieutenant of Cæsar the Dictator;—afterwards, that same year in which Carthage, the wretched object of our rivalry, was destroyed, the illustrious city of Corinth was laid waste with fire and sword, and by its overthrow left Greece for ever humbled and obscured. Yet, if we subdued her while pretending to protect her, we afterwards without any pretext entered Macedonia, and were only satisfied by finally dragging the ill-fated Perseus, the last of its kings, a captive attached to the triumphal chariot of Paulus Emilius.

"And thus having trampled upon and annihilated the liberties of those who had confided in

us, we stripped from their royal brows their diadems, crushed their sceptres, and tore in pieces their robes of purple; not that the world might be rescued from tyranny, but that we alone, fortunate, illustrious, and formidable, might remain to exercise it,—whilst all other nations, oppressed, vilified, and plundered, might look on in tacit admiration of our incredible audacity. Nor are these my words dropping gall, for they are even still more confirmed by the effects of our sanguinary and accursed deeds. For scarcely had Emilius sent into Italy the rich spoils of the captive monarch, when the Senate passed a decree, ordering him to subdue all the cities of Epirus which had supported the fortunes of that king. Wherefore, Emilius concealing the atrocious decree by means of a still more atrocious dissimulation, entered Epirus, feigning sentiments of moderation, as if disposed to re-establish the liberties of that province.

"He afterwards ordered, that, on a certain day throughout every city, all the gold and silver which was in the houses and temples should be publicly brought forth, and at the same time he occupied all their streets with his legions;—and

after he had been obeyed in every point, upon an unexpected signal, the soldiers, now aware of the perfidy of their general, possessed themselves of all the remaining property of the betrayed and wretched citizens. Thus they revelled in their wicked prey, as the glorious reward decreed by the conscript Fathers for their glorious oppression of Macedonia. Full threescore and ten cities were laid waste in such a manner, that they actually disappeared from off the face of the earth that execrable day. There only remained their ruins scattered over the desolate fields, the execrable proofs of the splendid fury of the Romans. One hundred and fifty thousand citizens were conducted as slaves, to languish as followers or spectators of a haughty triumph; the remainder wandered dispersed amongst the ruins of their native country, starving, wretched, and miserable exiles, objects of pity to the whole world, with the exception of ourselves. As the drunkard, never satiated with guzzling, reeling approaches, with tremulous hand, the full bowl to his greedy lips, thus we, more addicted to wickedness the further we advanced in it, extended suddenly our swords, still reeking in blood, into effeminate Asia,

and there found some cause for waging war against Antiochus the Great. His splendid and extensive dominions at length became a desolate province of the Roman people.

" During these successful acts of injustice, our cruel hatred to Carthage still remained, which destiny seemed to have placed in our sight on the opposite shore, as if to become the scene of our sanguinary glory. Then thinking ourselves fortunate, that there was presented to us by that powerful rival a vast field for our illustrious oppressions, we lighted up in Lybia, Iberia, and Lusitania, the flames of war, in the light of which our glorious massacres shone forth with splendour. And in these the principal actors were those Scipios, who, even here, appear rejoiced at these numerous misdeeds. Behold how the multitude, with blind admiration, submissively and silently contemplate their proud and ferocious aspect !"

CONFERENCE FOURTH.

Cæsar defends the Romans, and Pomponius further displays their Wickedness, especially by the Example of the Scipios.

While Pomponius discoursed, Cæsar listened to him with attention, at the same time turning his eyes frequently towards the Scipios. But at these last words, he tossed with his right hand the under part of his toga over his left shoulder, and, somewhat indignant, interrupted him thus:—

"What, then, would be the fate of a city governed by so pacific a genius as thou art?" Pomponius calmly replied:—

"To be oppressed with injustice, or happy without iniquity."

Cæsar then smiling, added:—"If any city could be founded in a place inaccessible to the

attacks of other nations, certainly this thy mild philosophy might not only be delightful to hear, but useful, and every one would desire to put it in daily practice; but since new cities spring up in the midst of ancient ones, and since all nations, either free or enslaved, are constantly excited by some fatal impetus to usurp power,—this quiet prosperity that is so much vaunted by thee could never be hoped for, by whoever contemplates in history the course of human changes, and forms a judgment on them by their probable results. Rome arose, it is true, from humble beginnings, but not by robbing others; because that region was a desert, where Romulus collected together our progenitors. Certainly it is a praiseworthy undertaking to change an abandoned territory into the flourishing habitation of a hardy and valiant race.

"Neither should he be reproached for having assembled outcasts and adventurers, or, if thou wilt so call them, malefactors, because he thus rid Italy of a pernicious incumbrance. These, like stray cattle, were by such a shepherd subjected to the yoke of a moderate government, and their rebellious minds were at length brought under the

dominion of that right reason, which thou had previously despised. Nor let it grieve thee, as if it had been a wonderful crime, that men, separated from the fair sex, should endeavour to procure by every means the necessary comfort of marriage; because, before that so much deplored rape of disconsolate virgins, the Romans had many several times, and even most humbly, entreated their neighbours to yield them their daughters in marriage on honourable terms. But having been indignantly refused, our progenitors were reduced finally to the necessity of taking them by force, in the way so lately deprecated by thee. But the virgins were less grieved at their lot than thou art, for they willingly pardoned them, since, as is well known, they threw themselves, all beautiful and unadorned, between the hostile ranks drawn up in order of battle, and with prayers and tears allayed their cruel wrath. Neither truce nor peace, nor alliance, but common and joint empire between ourselves and the implacable Sabines, was the admirable result of that delightful intercession.

"Next, the reign of Numa, which lasted more than eight lustres without wars or conspiracies, not feared but venerated, appears rather an image

of celestial happiness than an instance of human government. No other nation can boast of so placid, just, and peaceful a domination, in the midst of enraged and warlike neighbours, held in awe solely by the aspect of so much virtue. What if our ancestors had ever afterwards their bloody weapons in their hands, that did not happen so much from a restless wish to disturb the world as from the dire necessity of fortune; because all the other people of Italy, impelled either by fear or envy, arose in arms, anxious to conquer the rising city of Rome. She from the first, revenging her injuries, or defending her rude habitations on the Palatine hill, and her crops on the banks of the Tiber, was so fortunate as to compel her assailants not only to yield up their weapons, but to wield them for the future in her defence. This was a special act of wisdom on the part of our country, by which she did not hold the vanquished nations of Italy in a base and servile condition, but received them into her bosom like her other citizens. But from these just wars of defence arose the unlooked for necessity of preventing impending injuries,—therefore, our victories were extended into far distant countries,

where, according to the inevitable imperfections of all human affairs, our triumphs were sometimes disfigured by cruelties. For no war, however just or necessary, can be carried on for any length of time, without some excess of vengeance.

"Yet, I marvel that a mind like thine, so versed in the history of the world, should conceive that an art, essentially bloody and cruel, could be restrained like the common transactions of life within moderate boundaries. But Rome, amidst all the plentitude of her power and warlike success, displayed far beyond all other nations the most sublime instances of generous heroism and magnanimity, and which had never been before heard of amidst the atrocious licence of victory. With all nations the fidelity of our oaths and conventions was held sacred, so that, whenever a Roman made a promise, it was never distrusted. But since it has pleased thee to parade, in all the set artifice of oratory, before them some unfortunate enterprises, instead of consigning them for ever to oblivion, it behoves thee to recollect some of our numberless actions, the splendour of which have struck nations with astonishment. I trust that the memory even yet endures of our

loyalty towards the city of Falerii, when a schoolmaster treacherously conducted over to us the principal youths of the place, which we were then besieging. But our high-minded Camillus refused with scorn to avail himself of so useful an act of perfidy, and sent back those precious hostages. Neither do I believe, that time has overwhelmed the name of Fabricius, who, when warring against Pyrrhus, sent him notice, that his physician had made an offer to poison him. But if I proposed, O Quirites, to remind you of all the Roman virtues, I should disturb more than is befitting this silence of death, and should moreover repeat circumstances well known to you, because they were your own acts. I am, therefore, merely on the present occasion reminding this person of them, who is of the Equestrian order, and an accomplished, if not a valiant Roman."

The Dictator was silent, and with proud scorn regarded the multitude. The five Spectres scowled around with their eyes, which now seemed to blaze in their orbits with the glare of burning coals; whilst they compressed in silence their threatening lips. The midnight air remained

mute in these cavernous recesses. No shade presumed to utter a sound in the presence of these awful and venerated heroes. If such was the reverential feeling of so great a multitude, it is needless to state what was mine. But, behold that individual who I conceived, as well from the meekness of his disposition, as from a certain modesty during his life, would have been overawed by the presence of men so eminent in fame, on the contrary, intrepidly rejoined:—

"Since thou urgest me, O Dictator! with thy contemptuous reproofs, to establish still more our wickedness, I am resolved to make it the more manifest to listen to me, seeing the great unwillingness thou hast shown. You, therefore, shall hear it, ye Scipios, whom, when living, I knew only by your sculptured busts and formidable achievements. Nor let any one marvel, that a man, such as I was when on earth, leading a life of soft, but becoming repose, should here discourse with fervour, for such is my natural disposition, although on earth I concealed it. I held my peace there, not through cowardice, but because I was persuaded that every lofty and free sentiment would only be ridiculed

as the effusions of mere folly amidst such general corruption; insomuch, that I spent a great portion of my life at a distance from this unhappy country, not because I thought myself unworthy of serving it, but because it appeared to me then to be no longer deserving of any generous or perilous attempts in its behalf."

Whilst he thus discoursed, he shook his head, as naturally happens to those who speak with indignation, and his silvery locks fell waving over his shoulders. Then turning himself towards the Scipios, he proceeded:—

"On you, the first two glorious brothers, Cneius and Publius, laid low on the fields of Iberia, I will not pass censure, because ye died in battle, and no act of yours surpassed the wonted atrocity of warfare. But ye left to your descendants, who lived in an age after you, the opportunity, as well as fatal occasions, for slaughter. I speak of thee, son of Publius, of thee called Africanus the First, who, in New Carthage, (Carthagena,) in Iberia, didst celebrate the exequies of thy father and his brother, who perished there, with cruel pomp, as if in fatal token of thy future massacres. Then, at thy invitation, the cruel

gladiators fought upon their tombs, as if the very earth, which covered thy ancestors, was of itself thirsting for human blood. The barbarians of that region flocked to the atrocious spectacle, and there, with bloody wounds, gave vent to their ferocious madness. Nay, more, two princes, cousins, Orsua and Cerbis, who contended for the government of the city of Ibis, decided their disputes in single combat at these tombs, as if consecrated to human blood; and Orsua was there put to death by his competitor. Thereafter, thy standards carried desolation wherever they appeared. I behold the miserable Astapa destroyed by thy fatal legions, because it was a city faithful to the Carthaginians. She considered it so horrible a misfortune to fall into the power of the Scipios, that her citizens determined unanimously to perish rather than endure it. Wherefore, having collected their most precious articles of furniture into a heap in the public square, and having placed upon it their wives and children, they next surrounded them with dry faggots and firewood. Fifty youths stood ready with torches to set fire to this dreadful funeral pile, as soon as the atrocious conqueror should enter. In the

meantime, the air was rent with the sorrowful imprecations of that innocent multitude, who called down the vengeance of heaven upon the heads of the Romans,—those disturbers of the peace of the world, with their perfidious cruelty. Then there issued forth against you all the youths fit to carry arms, determined not to survive a defeat. But fortune, the accomplice of our oppressions, stretched them all dead on the field. At that news, the few who remained within the city cut the throats of the women and children, and threw their expiring bodies into the flames, which were in a manner extinguished from rivers of human blood. They themselves afterwards, wearied by this miserable slaughter, rushed into those flames which had consumed their native country. The Romans then entered, and, wishing to ravish from the conflagration the silver and gold which glittered amongst it, some were burnt up, others suffocated in the smoke, from their eagerness to obtain plunder; which example of marvellous cruelty was of itself sufficient to stain the fame of thy race for ever. Nevertheless, thou wishedst, as a glorious deed, to renew it afterwards in Italy, in the city of Locri. She had, in Magna Græcia, follow-

'ed the fortunes of the Carthaginians, her ancient masters. But thou, in order to punish the necessary obedience of those citizens, sentest thither thy legate Quintus Pleminius, already noted for his infamous actions; in conformity with which, abusing his victory, he permitted his soldiers to ravish from their paternal arms the daughters, and even the children from their mother's womb. Lamentations, (O unspeakable horror!) deaths, rapes, and madness, filled that ruined and devoted city; which extreme wickedness, although not actually committed by thee, O! inexorable Captain! were however equally thine, since they were approved and connived at by thee."

Then Pomponius suspended his discourse.—And, O marvellous! Scipio was mute; the rest also of his haughty race remained silent, with downcast eyes and moody countenances. But Pomponius, with still more animated voice, proceeded:—

"Now I speak to thee, Scipio Emilianus, the destroyer of cities, and particularly of wretched Carthage. Its citizens, then overwhelmed by misfortunes, came forth to thee, as suppliants ready to subscribe to any conditions. But that

rival of Roman glory was devoted to destruction; such was the decree of the implacable Conscript Fathers; it behoved them to break down that rampart so troublesome to our ambition. Thus, then, was reduced, with little resistance and much cruelty, to a heap of direct ruins, that vast ancient and flourishing city, which had maintained for seven centuries upon the seas its dreaded dominion! Thou didst behold thereafter the consort of Hamilcar, then the general of that falling empire, that she might not become thy slave, first stab her children, and throw them into the flames, that were consuming the temple of Esculapius—invoke with loud cries the vengeance of heaven—and, lastly, rush herself into the same conflagration. It is said, however, that when thou hadst beheld that wretched city disappear from the face of the earth, a tear escaped from thy eye, and a sigh burst from thy ferocious breast. Ask not if that tear was genuine;—well do I know that it is not unlike that of the executioner, who, when holding up the head in his hand, deplores that he has deprived the trunk of life. I know that, in prosecution of that glorious work of devastation, thou didst overthrow soon after all the cities of

Africa, which were the allies of the Carthaginians. I know that that region, after having been reduced by thee to a desert sand, was then pompously styled a Roman province. I know that to thee remained the title of the Second Africanus, and that Africa was consigned to Proconsuls, who, by means of their unpunished tyranny and exactions, perpetuated the devastations of thy conquest.

"But now Iberia, become the bloody theatre of the glory of the Scipios, called upon thee to imitate there the examples of thy family. Already, on hearing thy formidable name, the mothers and matrons turned pale in that wretched country, still reeking with the blood of their sons and husbands. Behold, then, the heroic city of Numantia beleaguered by thy legions. Its citizens, free and illustrious, from their contempt of death, in vain provoked thy soldiers to open combat. Shut up in thy encampments, thou employed famine only to extinguish their generous valour. Soon the inhabitants of Numantia exchanged the appearance of living men for that of skeletons and apparitions. The anguish of hunger, Oh! horrible alternative! induced them to

kill each other secretly, and to devour the bodies already half wasted by famine, so that they might sustain their drooping lives. Yet, in that dreadful state, rather than surrender their weapons, the citizens determined to put each other to death, and thus perish with their country. They, therefore, set fire to all the four quarters of the city, and, by its funeral light, sacrificed themselves to their expiring liberties. After the houses and their inhabitants had been killed and consumed, the few who survived, staggering along the smoking and deserted streets, reached the gates and opened them, putting thee in the possession of the famished spectres in that desolate city. Yet even these were sold by thee like cattle, without any commiseration for their wretchedness,—without any respect for their generous obstinacy. O thou exterminator of innocent nations! O thou tyrant over a free people! Art thou not he who thereafter punished the city of Lutia, because she, commiserating the oppression of Numantia, promised to send it assistance? And although thy benevolent intentions were not carried into effect, yet thou sentencedst Lutia to send thee four hundred of her young men, whose hands

thou hadst the barbarity to have chopped off in token of thy vengeance. O wretched proceedings! frightful to be recounted, dreadful to be heard, yet which, nevertheless, decorated thy name with the pompous title of Numantian! If so much ignorance then clouded our blind intellects, and so much vileness then terrified our timid hearts, that we admired deeds so contrary to human reason, and confessedly vile, cruel, and wicked, I lament it, and in death, at least, I exhort you to be better than ye were during life."

At these words Emilianus cast down his hitherto menacing eyes, and covered his forehead with his hand, as if he repented him of some wicked action. Then some few tears dropped upon his shaggy bosom, on which he reclined his chin, as if labouring under a heavy load of affliction. The other Scipios turned away their faces, and veiled them with the hems of their garments. Then Pomponius exclaimed:—

"Ah! why are not these illustrious tears now beheld by the people living at this time in Iberia, Africa, and Asia, those regions where that ferocious race once caused far other tears to flow—those of heart-broken fathers, and desolate widows

and orphans? The sight of these repentant tears might be in some measure an atonement to indignant posterity for the unmerited wrongs ye have inflicted on their ancestors."

CONFERENCE FIFTH.

Pomponius proceeds to blame the Oppressions exercised upon the Iberians and the Gauls.—Cæsar accuses the latter of barbarous Customs, and Pomponius insists that no People were more barbarous than the Romans.

Pomponius ceased, and awaited with confidence some answer from them; but receiving none, thus added in continuation:—

"This, then, is a sign that there did exist in your breasts some spark of generosity, since these reproaches have at length awakened in you a sensation of pity and repentance. No one, however, can accuse you of having been the sole oppressors of those regions, because one single family was not sufficient, although bred up in slaughter, to execute all the massacres which the Senate

caused to be performed there; as thou well knowest, O Emilianus Numantinus! who in thy youth servedst in the army in Iberia, under the standard of the Consul and Licinius Lucullus, when he governed there. Upon thy arrival, peace had been concluded with the Celtiberi; nevertheless, without other cause than the thirst of plunder, he led the army against Cauca, one of their richest cities, which, being unprepared for resistance, surrendered upon honourable conditions, and admitted the victorious legions. Soon after they had entered it, the ferocious Licinius, throwing off the mask, massacred upwards of twenty thousand citizens, and then seizing upon all the old men, and women, and children who had been spared, sold them as slaves. Thou also knowest, that a short time before Numantia had been destroyed by thee, a solemn treaty of peace had been concluded in the presence of the Roman army, between the Proconsul Q. Pompeius and the Numantians. But the Senate, wishing to follow up that advantage, disapproved of that treaty of peace; wherefore, the messengers from Numantia were sent back, after a fruitless errand hither, the public faith having been

violated towards them. Then the Conscript Fathers, with the blackest treachery, abandoned Numantia to thy tremendous wrath. In imitation of which examples, Servius Sulpitius Galba, Prætor in Lusitania, then wasted that province with fire and sword, to the very shores of the Western Ocean, whose billows alone set bounds to his insatiable rapine. The desolate people implored for peace. The Prætor consented to their request, feigning pity at the same time for some of them who inhabited sterile regions, and offering to transport them to such as were more fertile. Enticed by his kind proposals, they were divided into three colonies, ready to be transferred to the provinces allotted for them. The Prætor, with flattering persuasions, induced them to assemble together in three separate situations. Then betaking himself to one of these, he guilefully began lamenting, that they, being the friends of the Roman people, and therefore having now but one common country, should still remain under arms. He prayed them, therefore, to lay them down, as being an odious indication of unmerited distrust. Which deceitful reasoning had such an effect on the minds of that simple people, that

they allowed themselves to be persuaded. But, after all their arms had been collected and removed, the Prætor ordered his soldiers to surround the unarmed multitude, and massacre them indiscriminately before his face. These poor wretches invoked the vengeance of heaven to visit you for this execrable treachery, while the Prætor calmly beheld the slaughter. Having thus been successful with this first colony, he, by the same artifice, massacred the two others in succession, butchering them like sheep in a fold, to the amount of at least thirty thousand. Contemplate, I pray, Roman faith, of which ye so proudly made your boast as loyal observers.

"But heaven had reserved an illustrious avenger of so much wickedness. I speak of Viriatus, who, by an incredible accident, survived this massacre. Born a shepherd, and worthy of a royal cradle, from the eminent qualities of his mind, he assembled together these oppressed people, and with them opposed your tyranny for upwards of ten years, during which he humbled your arrogance with constant defeats. Neither had he been vanquished, but for a stratagem, which reflects on you eternal disgrace. For the Consul

Servilius Cæpio promised to two messengers, sent by Viriatus to treat of peace, a large reward, if they would deprive him of life. They, seduced by this flattering promise, stabbed their general while sleeping in his tent. Having afterwards returned to the Consul, they demanded their reward. But treason is only valued in proportion to its utility, while the workers of it are always deservedly abominated. Wherefore, the Consul coldly made answer, that he was not qualified to decide what reward was suited to warriors who had put to death their own general; but would leave it to the judgment of the Senate. He, therefore, sent in the traitors to the Senate, leaving the world in doubt, which of the two acts of treachery was the greater. Thus, thou perceivest, O Cæsar! how slight was the recollection of the probity of Camillus with the pedagogue of Falerii, and of Fabricius with Pyrrhus, threatened with poison! Why dost thou not also remember, that three hundred children of the Volsci, surrendered as hostages, were slaughtered by us? The wicked actions of the Romans, like a mighty torrent, sweep away and totally overwhelm their few honourable transactions. These

merely shine out like flashes of lightning in the night, only to make the succeeding darkness appear more intense. But now commences the spectacle of thy glorious massacres in Gaul, the nations of which were continually infested by our legions. There, too, had reached the fame of Roman villany. Already the Consul Domitius had induced Bituitus, king of the Avernians, to come into his camp, in order to conclude a peace, where he was afterwards retained a prisoner, fettered with irons, and sent to Rome, where the valiant and credulous monarch was dragged in a triumphal procession, and thus cleared the way for thy future usurpations. Previously to this, Gaul contained in her bosom many rich and powerful kingdoms; but, after having been submitted to the avidity of our Proconsuls, she sunk down into a wretched province, another fatal instance of our ferocious rapine."

Cæsar, hitherto a silent hearer, at these words lifted up his head, which had been before pensively reclined. The laurel which encircled his bald temples had sunk somewhat over his scowling eyebrows. He then moved them with his right-hand, and, in touching them, said:—

"If, then, the merits of this triumphal emblem are to be disputed by thee, it would be a degradation longer to listen with patience to thy insolent assertions. Wilt thou pretend to talk of my actions, and to call them in question? How can such a man as thou wert, esteemed only for thy timid prudence, and for thy honourable flight from thy country's calamities, the friend of the competitors for the supreme authority, through the flattering complacency of thy manners, placid amidst the tempest, secure amidst disasters, delicate amidst slaughter, uninjured amidst perils, whose insignificance was well known now that these dangers are over, pretend to discourse so audaciously about us and Roman virtue?" Pomponius, unmoved, replied:—

"During my lifetime I felt no other fear than that of giving offence to virtue; and as I consider it impossible not to outrage it during civil commotions, I withdrew myself altogether from them. But if, during the fatal ignorance of our abode upon earth, our benighted understanding was held under the influence of evil, behold death has at present removed the flimsy covering of falsehood. Truth now shines upon my mind

with triumphant splendour; and my diseased thoughts no longer waver amidst the inconstancy of human delirium. Most unjust do I esteem a great portion of our enterprises, wherefore I passed my life in innocence, and was unspotted with blood, while it flowed around me like a deluge.

"Wilt thou, then, who art stained not only with the slaughter of murdered nations, but also with that of thy own fellow-citizens, presume to cast blame upon my innocence? Calmly, but in no vile course, did I spend my life, and lightly enough did I esteem it; for, without waiting for the tyranny of old age, I descended, of my own accord, into the tomb, by means of starvation. Alas! for the ferocity of your minds, from which the lapse of so many ages hath not eradicated the fatal love of carnage."

Thus saying, he beat his breast with his hands, while his eyes appeared suffused with tears, which were only restrained from flowing, by his manly firmness of mind. Cæsar added;—

"No war was ever more just than that we waged so long against the Gauls, which, taking its origin from their attacks, was prosecuted afterwards from the necessity of defence, and, ter-

minating happily, subdued a people who were both cruel and envious of our greatness. They, without provocation, but moved thereto only by brutal ferocity, attempted the destruction of Rome in its infancy, slaughtered our defenceless and venerable Senators, and afterwards our Ambassadors, whose limbs they hacked to pieces. But such cruel perfidy was befitting that people, all whose customs were abominable and atrocious. Did they not affix to their stirrups the gory heads of those they slew in war, as a glorious ornament?, and did they not afterwards convert their skulls into cups, to be used in their inebriating banquets? Nor less ferocious were their funeral rites, in which they offered at the pile their slaves and dearest dependants, and then tossed them in to be consumed together, with the corpse of their departed master? What a fatal divinity was that from which they pretended to be descended, namely, the deity of the infernal regions! and still more dreadful were the sacrifices they offered it—human victims. The cruel Druids plunged their daggers into the hearts of these, and holding the hilts in their hands, pretended, from the number of convulsive throbs,

to divine future events. But during their greater festivals, they formed gigantic figures of wicker work, the immense and shapeless limbs of which they filled by a cruel invention, with living men, mixed with ferocious animals. Then having set fire to the gigantic mass, there issued from amidst clouds of smoke, and the crackling of the flames, the groans of men, and howlings of wild beasts, which were listened to by the superstitious multitude with feelings of intense devotion. Such was the nation which I, in necessary war, overthrew, and forced to abandon these execrable customs. At what then dost thou grieve, O Atticus, unless at what ought to rejoice every Roman?" He sedately replied:—

"Since thou declaimest so much against the cruelty of these nations, denominated by us in our pride barbarous, let us see whether, amongst ourselves, there was no occasion for the same accusations.

"With no other nation was the authority of parents so tyrannical as with ourselves; by means of the absolute power of which, a father might either abandon his infants, or expose them in the woods, or dash them to atoms against the walls

Afterwards when grown up, he might employ them in servile occupations, sell them as slaves, slaughter them like cattle, or disinherit them, without alleging any reason. Tell me what other nation had more ferocious laws against their debtors? Abandoned as slaves to their creditors, bound in chains, scourged with rods, they were forced often to plough like oxen, in those very fields which had been bathed with their blood during our wars. In vain these poor wretches displayed on their breasts their battle-wounds, while upon their shoulders were to be seen the livid marks of their servile stripes.

"After ninety days of outrage, if they failed in producing the sum in which they stood indebted, it was in the power of the creditor, according to the atrocious laws of the twelve tables, to put his debtor to death, and if there were several creditors, they might divide his limbs amongst them. Thence the houses of our ancestors were become prisons filled with wretches in chains, the victims of their cruel usury. The multitude were daily flattered with the pompous title of liberty! But in fact they had only the freedom of venting their sighs and complaints. And, indeed, what pity

could be expected from men, who had reduced cruelty to a regular public system! Consider the abominable spectacle of the gladiators, in training whom, more care and diligence were employed than in the useful and liberal arts. The bodies of those destined to this barbarous sport were delicately pampered, in order that their naked limbs, when exposed, might appear fair, fat, and beautiful; that their wounds might seem more deep and dreadful, and produce a more exalted degree of horror in the minds of the spectators. They were taught to fall with grace, to vent their agonies with decorum, and expire in noble attitudes. The delirious applauses of the multitude drowned the sobs of the dying; and their joy was extravagant, in exact proportion to the number of the wounded, and of those killed under remarkable circumstances. Nor was it only a cruel and warlike body of men who frequented these shows, but even timid children and young virgins sat in our amphitheatres, and contemplated with savage delight the terrible convulsions of dying men. Such were the delightful recreations of a people instructed to disperse oppression over the face of the earth; so that there

was no other mode of insinuation more suited to acquire their favours, than delighting them by a frequent display of such bloody spectacles. Thus, when thou, O Dictator, wert Edile, in order to pave the way for thy career of ambition, thou gavest the people a show of six hundred gladiators. What do I say? Even during our splendid banquets, whilst stretched upon downy pillows, and listening to the adulation of parasites, and quaffing the richest Falernian; it was even an additional luxury to behold, at the ends of the saloon, the reeking blood of gladiators. Then, to show still more our contempt for humanity, the combatants were opposed to wild beasts, which, lacerating in a dreadful manner their limbs, presented such a disgusting species of combat, that it may be doubted whether the brutes or the spectators were more debased. Nevertheless, these last afforded the greatest delight to the Roman multitude; so that Sylla, when he was anxious to acquire popularity in his progress towards tyranny, being then Prætor, indulged their ferocity by a spectacle of one hundred lions fighting with gladiators. But the great extent of our inhuman usages has made me pass over the horrid oppres-

sion with which we treated our prisoners of war. This was befitting, as well as necessary, to a nation of tyrants. Yet this must not be forgotten, that our slaves and their descendants were, by law, considered not as persons, but things, in which horrible decree is included an impious concourse of inhuman doctrines. So that it is the less surprising that we were accustomed to vent the effusions of our rage in scourging and murdering our slaves.

"Where art thou, Vedius Pollio, who, even in my days, which were not the most ferocious, used to kill thy slaves, and, with their bodies, fatten the lampreys in thy fish-ponds? What cannibal was ever more skilful in preparing his abominable repasts? Where dost thou lurk, O Consul Metellus, who, in the war against Jugurtha, having caused thy deserters to be sent back to thee, punished them like slaves, by causing them to be buried alive up to the chest, and then surrounding them with fire, in which they remained smothering and consuming? Was not such a warlike discipline worthy only of a nation of exterminators!

"Then, in the many and grave deliberations

of our Republic, we were not guided by lofty doctrines, or wise laws, but by the flight of birds, —the sound of thunders in the clouds—the palpitating entrails of oxen,—the Sybilline books,—the obscure oracles,—vain dreams, or more vain divinations of the Aruspices, or of the Augurs,—those sage deluders of the vulgar; and thus the most cruel minds timidly perplexed themselves by fatal prodigies.

"Marius having met amongst the ruins of Carthage two scorpions, which fought together desperately, with all the credulity of an ignorant old woman, considering this as an unlucky omen, fled in a panic from Africa, although the conqueror of so many nations. That cruel and haughty exterminator of our enemies, and of ourselves, the inexorable Sylla, used to suspend a small image of Apollo from his neck, and fervently address his prayers to it during the heat of battle. Thus, two tremendous competitors for thy empire, O Rome! at whose very name mothers and children trembled, were themselves downright cowards in superstition. It appears, however, that Marius was at one and the same moment credulous himself, and a deceiver of the

multitude, considering how he was in the habit of constantly taking with him, during his formidable enterprises, Marta, a Syrian sorceress, skilled in foretelling futurity. In which sagacious artifice Sertorius was no less expert, who, by means of the doe of Diana, maintained himself successfully in Iberia; and beyond all others, Numa, the inventor of mysteries, with his nymph! Still, if there be any sort of deceit allowable, it is that by means of which a cruel nation is rendered humane.

"Lastly, O Dictator! in the course of thy arguments were mentioned the human sacrifices of the Gauls. But we, Romans, had a custom of burying alive our vestal virgins. Has it escaped thy recollection?—yet is a well-known fact, that after the first Carthaginian war, because it was written in the Sybilline oracles that the Greeks and the Gauls should occupy Rome, the Priests, to ward off that prediction, caused two men of each of these nations to be buried alive. And afterwards, at the commencement of the second Carthaginian war, the same barbarous sacrifice was put in practice in the forum Boarium, and was also renewed in the following century. Nay,

to whom am I speaking? Thou thyself, O Dictator! didst thou not celebrate in Rome that bloody rite! Behold the audacity of tyranny, that it even blames in another its own wicked actions! Lastly, What ceremony was more barbarous than that of our own triumphal processions!"

CONFERENCE SIXTH.

Pomponius condemns Triumphs, and then starts doubts as to Lucretia, which she, by her silence, confirms.

At this last interrogation, the crowd were thrown into commotion as if they had heard some impious opinion uttered. The Dictator, and Brutus, and Antony, and all the illustrious ghosts which surrounded Pomponius, gazed on him with looks of wonder.

The sage Tullius listened without anger to the free remarks of the former encourager of his studies, at the same time, he reclined his head towards his shoulder, and kept his eyes bent down on the ground. But the Attic speaker was not in the least disturbed by this sudden uproar; on the contrary, he continued in a strain of greater anima-

tion:—"Exactly in proportion to the gentleness of my manners during my lifetime, is now the severity of my judgments in death. I therefore repeat it without indignation, yet divested of fear, that that pompous procession, by which all royal diadems were exposed to the outrages of the vulgar, was a cruel and abominable excess of arrogance. For whenever our ambassadors, generals, and consuls, were at any time made prisoners by the enemy, they were not treated with any such public degradation. To us, therefore, belongs all the merit of so cruel an invention. What, then, were we, who, trampling on the robes and crowns of kings, dared to call ourselves the subduers of tyrants? Were we not the destroyers of brave and innocent nations?—Were we not the insatiable plunderers of fertile and splendid regions? Did we not drag in chains through these our streets, kings of an ancient race, illustrious, and warlike, and beloved by their own subjects? Did we not behold how, as they passed along with humble and downcast eyes, exposed to the scoffs of the rabble, the manly burning tears of indignation trickled down their manly cheeks? Their sorrowing consorts and children, late the hopes

of these vanquished nations, accompanied with sighs their monarch, now become the slave of Roman arrogance. Then was his palace exchanged for a prison, his sceptre for shackles, all his glory tarnished by infamy, and his race degraded to associate with malefactors.

"But, perhaps, while we thus trampled their royal necks under our feet, we relieved their subjects from an outrageous tyranny, and rendered them more free and more happy? On the contrary, the conquered nations deplored the hapless lot of their monarchs,—for how did our Proconsuls console them for their misfortunes? Because our thirst after their gold, when we governed them, was exactly in proportion to the indifference with which we had poured forth their blood in subduing them. Such was the common lot of Sicily, of Africa, of Greece, of Iberia, of Gaul, and of all the other countries which were destroyed by us; and which, when they had lost their princes, fell under the oppressions of the Roman Patricians, who were of course strangers to their language, their national habits and usages, and who were only solicitous to devour them speedily. Even here in Rome, we our-

selves at one time slaves, and at another tyrants, were alternately subjected to the oppressions of the Senate or the outrages of the multitude.

" Nor, indeed, did our hatred of the royal authority derive its origin from a pure but from a polluted fountain. Thence the sad and barbarous effects were in perfect accordance with their miserable occasion. And what else indeed was that, but the affair of Lucretia, which in truth was not sufficient to awaken such implacable vengeance? Are ye not the same, who violated not only one but seven hundred females, during the reign of Romulus? How, then, could ye feel so much irritation against the son of your king for a crime so much less than that of your ancestors? How could ye permit the complaints of a woman to excite in your breasts such extravagant rage against the kingly power, as to disgrace, abominate, and persecute it? Oh, wise people! thus to believe a weeping adulteress, who narrated that she had been, in the silence of night, overpowered and violently ravished by a single man, as if he had been a giant, like Briareus. Oh, just people! who expelled the royal father, who was nei-

ther conscious to, nor an approver of the doubtful adventure!"

As an unexpected whirlwind upon the sea puts the billows in motion, so the Spectres, who had silently listened, now waving to and fro, roared like wind amongst a grove of oak trees. At the same moment there appeared a female apparition, who, enveloped in a white veil, rushed forth, as if desirous to excite a tumult by her shrieks and attitudes, expressive of violent grief. At one moment she plunged herself amongst the thickest part of the crowd, then issued forth like the moon from behind clouds. When quitting the crowd thus excited by her, she stood forwards singly in the centre, and remained fixed. Her graceful limbs shone through the long transparent veil which descended to her feet, like a rose involved in the morning dews. Then suddenly she tore it open with a fresh burst of indignation, exposing the fairness of her well turned shoulders, and her beating bosom; on which, however, as if suddenly repenting herself, she with her right hand held her disordered veil, displaying great part of her figure uncovered. She cast down her weeping eye-lids. The traces of deep sorrow appear-

ed on her forehead, from which descended her luxuriant tresses of gold over her milk-white limbs. Ah, me! how beauty in distress chills the heart! I, on beholding her, now felt running through my veins the shivering of pity, when I was startled by the general whisper repeating the name of Lucretia. Pomponius, undisturbed by the tumult, nor by the fame of so celebrated a lady now standing by his side, thus intrepidly proceeded:—

"O celebrated consort of Collatinus! be not indignant at my conjectures respecting thy story; for they do not arise from any hatred to thee, but from a desire of truth. Now, thou thyself mayest declare it, after so many centuries of uncertain opinions."

Then the lady raised her disconsolate countenance, and fixed her sorrowful eyes upon the interrogator. She panted, trembled, and her choking sorrow appeared to prevent her utterance. A sorrowful silence filled the air, for the crowd, in attitudes of stupor, expected from her some extraordinary declarations. Thus, the hearers are hushed, when some celebrated vocalist rises up to warble. But the lady remained in that state of

sorrow, as if she was unable to speak, or was in doubt which, of a multitude of words which crowded to her lips, she ought to pronounce or keep back. At length, she declined her chin upon her delicate breast, in the attitude of humility, and, as if overwhelmed with grief, she sunk down upon a tomb. The expectation of hearing her was then not only deluded, but extinguished, when Tullius interrupted the silence thus:—

"I know not, my Atticus, why now thou art pleased here to offend, with bitter sayings, whilst with us they formerly glided so gently from thy lips. Certain it is, that of the outrages she suffered, there were no witnesses but the darkness and silence of night; yet the magnanimous punishment which she inflicted on herself is a sufficient demonstration of her innocence. Neither her bridal-couch, nor her mind, were contaminated by the royal debauchery: her body only suffered from that atrocity, in which, as profaned, this chaste spirit of her's afterwards disdained to continue. Behold the large wound in her chaste breast! Oh! steel that divided it, wilt thou not be sufficient to silence calumny!"

Atticus answered:—"Although it may be an

audacious undertaking to contend in words with thee, O Father of Roman eloquence! nevertheless, as it is here at length permitted to us to judge of human transactions, without the restraint of timid opinions, and thou hast defended, by the marvellous arts of thy eloquence, not only the innocent, but also the guilty, thus now thou discoursest of a doubtful cause in a tone of authority. But I freely affirm to you, that that lady hath narrated a most improbable adventure."

Marcus Brutus hearing that sentence, appeared sad, remembering that Junius, from whom he was descended, extracted the dagger from her breast, and was an active promoter of the mighty and memorable vengeance.

But Atticus subjoined:—"For be it remembered, that, even according to her own account, she was not threatened with death, by a cruel lover, in the midst of a desert solitude, in which she might have vented her complaints in vain, but in the house of her husband, surrounded by her relations and slaves; and which, according to the simplicity of those times, was probably of no great extent. And granting, even, that the atrocious Sextus had threatened to lay by her side the

dead body of a murdered slave, as an ignominious proof of her frailty, still, it is clear, that such an excess was difficult of execution, as she might easily have prevented it by loud and desperate shrieks. I am grieved, therefore, on account of her good fame, that she was overpersuaded, on that shocking trial, that there was no other means of rescuing herself from infamy, but by submitting to the wishes of her lover. What a wonderful degree of docility, in a lady of the greatest chastity, to repress, not only the struggles of defence, but even all efforts of her voice, in so painful a conflict! Most marvellous deliberation, first to contaminate the bridal-bed, and then to bathe it in her own blood. Neither, truly, was the royal youth disagreeable and disgusting, but full of grace and courage. He had been by her most courteously received;—he had been entertained by her at the supper-table, and thereafter escorted by her slaves to the apartments reserved for guests. O what girlish simplicity was thine, who, after harbouring such a guest, in whose eyes thy female penetration ought to have perceived his hidden thoughts, didst not even barricade thy bed-chamber, nor hadst

near thee a single handmaid,—so that the midnight traitor came to thee openly, like a favoured lover."

Brutus then exclaimed:—"Why then did she reveal that infamy which she might have concealed with so much propriety and impunity? For what could have been a more foolish resolution, than to excite such mortal hatred against her lover? She herself being her own voluntary accuser, and the instigator of vengeance against her perfidious violator. For, admitting that she had weakly yielded herself to the arms of the flattering youth, yet what could be a more improbable act of madness, than that she should accuse and murder herself, when love alone, silent and successful, was aware of their midnight secrets?"

Pomponius quietly replied:—"It is well known to many who lived in those days, that Sextus was a juvenile braggard, who, instead of concealing his conquests amongst the female sex, basely proclaimed them. It is also an historical fact, that he undertook to lay siege to the virtue of Lucretia, in order to make game of Collatinus, who extolled her as a paragon of female virtue. Therefore, the young man, glorying in his difficult tri-

umph, was anxious to reveal it, in derision of the credulous husband. As soon, therefore, as the short dream of delirium had passed away, and left the mind of Lucretia awake, she immediately discovered that she stood on the brink of an abyss, and resolved rather to perish in falsehood with renown, than to encounter inevitable disgrace and punishment, by admitting the truth."

Then Brutus turned round to Lucretia, and exclaimed :—" Thou who, in thy lifetime, didst reveal with painful words, occult ignominy, wherefore dost thou not speak in death, and, by a single sentence, render mute thy detractors?"

Ah me! I beheld, at these words, the tears rush from her disconsolate eyes, which she wiped away with her veil, and then threw it over her whole form, as if to conceal her blushes. In an agony of affliction, she then seated herself upon the ground, and covering her face with both her hands, bent her head upon her knees in an attitude of distress. The surrounding spectators regarded each other mutually, wondering at her silence; and Brutus added, with a tone of pity :—

" Unhappy art thou, if thou wert really innocent, and art now, by some unknown destiny, de-

prived of speech, by which thou art subject to this new outrage of being accused, without being able to vindicate thyself!"

She, on hearing this, arose sorrowfully, and appeared actually to consent to be mute, from some celestial decree.

Wherefore Brutus, in a tone of consolation, added:—"If thou wert really frail upon that ever ambiguous night, yet thou didst display thy magnanimity on the succeeding day; and thou mayest boast of having laid the foundation of our liberty by thy powerful example."

Then he went on, in consoling terms, narrating the exile of the king, the glorious vengeance, and the succeeding illustrious events,—in listening to which, her eyes appeared to sparkle, and her countenance to be less sad, as at the breath of Zephyr the sky became again serene. She then disappeared, leaving our minds, as at first, in a state of uncertainty as to her fame. Yet the crowd continued wrangling together in a variety of opinions as to this adventure, over which is thrown the darkness of time, and the impenetrable silence of love. But just at this time the stars began to fade, and the darkness to die away be-

fore the rising Aurora. I, buried in that deep cave, did not perceive that constant succession of light and shade upon the earth. But as, when imprisoned in a ship, by beholding the direction of the magnetic needle, the pilot distinguishes the course of the vessel, so I, upon beholding the spectres wavering to and fro, then losing their voices, and gradually vanishing into air, was assured that the rays of day, denied to them, now held empire in the sky. Wherefore I came forth staggering, nor did I appear to be really in life, until I had respired the balmy breath of the morning air, and was cheered with the delightful chirping of birds. They rejoiced at the returning splendour with glad and varied songs, filled my heart with bliss, and at the same time lulled all the mental senses into a languid oblivion of care.

NIGHT THIRD.

NIGHT THIRD.

CONFERENCE FIRST.

Respecting the Illustrious Persons who put to Death their own Children,—Junius Brutus, and Virginius,—upon whose appearance a Debate arises as to the merits of those magnanimous Actions.

THE wonders which I had both seen and heard excited in my mind a variety of tumultuous feelings. For I began to consider, that if it had been granted to men, who excelled in any particular learning, to converse with those dead who had previously attained a still greater excellence in the same, how much the general store of human knowledge might have been advanced. That then

the grief of the learned might have been lessened for the loss of so great a portion of history, and antiquity would no longer remain separated from us by such an immense chasm. But possibly the cultivators of the sciences would not have equal cause to rejoice; because of these only some slight gleams appear to shine out in the remoter ages, as if oppressed by fortune, and reduced to ruins; —how, conversing with the dead, we should hear the history and progress of their inventions, and of arts possibly unknown to us, and many wonderful occurrences and mysteries of nature, now, alas! buried in the womb of oblivion. The names of the inventors of useful employments, and of delightful arts, would no longer continue concealed, nor would the causes of so many past events remain longer unknown to us; and which are now so vainly investigated by the aid of fatiguing conjectures.

It would then perhaps appear, that ages, revolving in a mighty circle, bestow, and withdraw the sciences from nations. Then complaints of the shortness of human life would be less frequent; for, at present, scarcely has our intellect acquired its full strength, and sketched out an

outline of wisdom, when, lo! the sound is heard of the fatal trumpet. Whilst I was perplexed with these considerations, the lately heard sentences were still ringing in my ears, and the images were yet floating before my eyes.

Therefore, on the succeeding night, I descended into the cavern, still more anxious to behold new prodigies. Nor was I long there awaiting their coming; for speedily Marcus Tullius appeared, and, meeting me with a cheerful countenance, commenced:—

"Noble is this desire of thine to converse here, and this repetition of thy visits displays thy constancy. For not only doth thy breast seem free from the intrusions of fear, but apparently the more that thou seest us, the more anxious art thou to hear us."

And I answered:—"Is it not common in this life, that warriors should intrepidly go to encounter an enemy thirsting for their blood? Wherefore, then, should I fly from the incorporeal aspect of such minds, who, when clothed in humanity, were accustomed to be terrible only to the proud, but were ever courteous to the humble! I come, with submission, to your innocent empire,

and fear still more the living than you; because they are disturbed by those pernicious appetites, of which you have divested yourselves, along with your frail covering. And how could your generous natures become so depraved, that here, immersed in the ocean of eternity, ye should think of doing violence to one who is your ardent admirer?"

Tullius kindly added:—"Just are thy opinions as to our nature, O candid descendant! And although my Pomponius, with his liberal philosophical opinions, somewhat tinctured with Grecian effeminacy, has blamed, as you lately heard, the vices of the Romans, and described them as being monstrous and infinite, even he, with all his bitter revilings, could not number baseness or cowardice among their faults. For, amidst all our most culpable deeds, there was not awanting a certain majestic and splendid virtue, more especially that which induced us only to wage war against the powerful."

While he thus addressed me, the caves were filled with an infinite multitude; wherefore, turning himself towards them, he remained silent. But he kept his eyes steadily fixed on one, who

of all seemed most to excite his wonder. It was of a severe and aged aspect, clothed in a consular robe, and led in its hands two young men, who accompanied it with downcast looks. To me it seemed doubtful, whether this attitude was caused by a consciousness of guilt, or from a bashfulness becoming their youth. At their approach there was heard a general expression of pity; but the consular spectre, unmoved by it, with a severe look, having made a signal requesting attention, thus in authoritative style exclaimed:—

"Why this grief? Is it on account of these youths? Wherefore doth not their appearance light up a sentiment of generous indignation in every Roman breast truly great and free? Do ye grieve for me? I imagined I deserved not your pity, but your wonder. Wretched I am not, but happy in having afforded you an illustrious example, that the first of virtues is to vindicate our injured country."

Then I heard a voice from among the crowd, which said,—"Our eyes, albeit unmelted amidst scenes of carnage, yet wept, O terrible Consul, on beholding the axe descend at the signal of thy paternal hand!"

He answered:—"I was a father even in that dreadful crisis. No one could suppose that I did not suffer mortal anguish; but for your sakes I overcame it."

"Ah, then," exclaimed the spectre in the crowd, "the jets from the headless trunks sprinkled thy robe with thy own blood; and on beholding it our eyes became blinded with terror."

The Consul angrily rejoined:—"Oh wretched compassion! No, the true Romans could not have felt it, and thou only experienced it, because thou wert a cowardly admirer of tyrants. Vile slave of the Tarquins,—in this only audacious, that thou presumedst, in the presence of the high-minded Quirites, to argue with Junius Brutus, the father of their illustrious liberty!"

So saying, he pushed towards the multitude the two young men, quitting hold of their hands, and added:—"These, with my blood in their veins, again attempted to bend your necks to that yoke ye had scarcely shook off. I, the Consul,—I, the liberator of my country,—its hope,—its protector,—its avenger,—how could I call myself without crime—how could I believe myself without shame, the father of its betrayers?

Rome, persecuted by the snares of the exiled tyrants,—not yet confirmed in its liberty, required a vigorous example, which might cheer it in its infancy. That I gave to it. Whosoever then amongst you bewaileth it is ungrateful."

Here the other spectre said:—"Not unjust was the punishment, but cruel thy paternal constancy in awarding it; and horrible thy intrepidity in beholding it."

Junius then placed his hand on his side, elevated his chin, and proceeded:—"Was not I the judge in the Consular chair?"

The other answered:—"But thou wert their father."

"Yes," said Junius, "but much more of my country than of its enemies."

The spectre added:—"Dreadful was the crime,—fatal would have been clemency,—necessary was the punishment: but it was not requisite that thou shouldst have inflicted it; and still less that thou shouldst have contemplated it with atrocious severity."

"Who," exclaimed Junius, "but I who gave them to you, should have removed these wretched favourers of royal arrogance?"

The other replied:—"The Senate and the people."

Junius was silent, as if perplexed by a variety of feelings. He knitted his dark eyebrows, seemingly collecting his ideas for some extraordinary answer. But a sorrowful silence closed his lips. And the other spectre, after a short pause, thus concluded:—

"Oh Junius, if thou, by descending from the curule chair, had left Rome the free judge of thy sons, the splendour of thy fame would not have been overcast by the bloody eclipse of parricide!"

The other, with great solemnity, as if he had, on reflection, subdued his indignation, replied:—"Even if I had not been undeceived as to human glory in this ocean of truth, your silence at these remarks would have been sufficient for the purpose. Much am I grieved, that now, after twenty-three centuries, I should be obliged by fate again to behold you, O Romans, and what is still more grievous, to feel that you are unworthy of that exalted deed."

He then looked on the crowd with fierce contempt, and vanished into thin air. There still remained his two sons, who with tears sunk down

upon the tombs; but no one appeared to show compassion for them. Tullius, who stood by my side, pensively hung down his head, while a sudden shade of grief stole like a cloud over his countenance. That intellect which, with so much wisdom, hath defined in his volumes the offices of human life, seemed quite involved in a maze of opinions. My mind was perplexed during this debate, I therefore asked with reverence from the teacher some aid from his lofty doctrines. He, penetrating the weakness of my thoughts, said:—

"Thy most sagacious speculation as to defining human virtues will be always disturbed by doubts. Narrow is the limit amongst you which separates what is honourable from what is base, and their confines are even at times indistinct and variable, and a perpetual source of argument about irreconcileable opinions. Amongst us it was never yet agreed, whether the slaughter of Horatia, or the condemnation of Manlius, were great or ferocious actions. Thyself, not long since, heardst the doubtful opinions whether Marcus Brutus was to be reputed perfidious or generous. In many cases, therefore, and parti-

cularly in those which relate to extraordinary duties, it seems to me, that there is no course so safe as that of affirming nothing."

As Tullius thus concluded, there entered two apparitions whom I had not before beheld. The one was of a fierce aspect, armed with a coat of mail, and shining helmet. He grasped in his right hand a knife, flowing with blood, insomuch that the drops tracked his path. He rolled his terrible eyes. His beard was black and shaggy,—his eyebrows menacing,—his lips quivering,—his gestures proud and resolute. He led in his left hand a young damsel, whom he ushered in. She sorrowfully followed him, covered in a white mantle. Her neck and arms were nearly uncovered, and her feet only protected by light buskins. She reclined her face, over which her long hair fell and formed a veil, through which her soft eyes appeared like stars amongst the clouds.

"This is she," exclaimed the warrior, "the most wretched, the most glorious of all damsels. Behold the cruel steel, which I, for a magnanimous reason, plunged in her innocent heart. I, though loving her like a father, put her to death like an executioner. Here she still laments, in-

consolable, after so many revolutions of the spheres, because, in the flower of her youth, she quitted her delicate frame, for ever separated from her lover, just upon the eve of her nuptials."

The damsel then shook her head, and her luxuriant tresses falling in graceful ringlets over her shoulders, seemed to add an immortal grace to her fine and youthful form. Ah me! perchance the hand of Xeuxis, or Timanthes, or Apelles, would have trembled in attempting to imitate the beautiful sorrow expressed in that wondrous countenance. How then shall I attempt to depict it with my humble pen? Only let me say, that, lifting her dewy eyes, with tender voice she uttered words like these:—

"Alas! dreadful solitude, in which I, perpetually wandering, have never yet encountered my valiant and well-beloved Icilius! Why did my features please the tyrannical Decemvir? Miserable beauty, which I esteemed precious because it was grateful to my lover,—but fatal, since it excited such a wicked passion in the persecutor of my short-lived happiness. O, father, behold the wound! Yet do I not grieve at it."

Thus saying, with gentle breath, lamenting

like a dove, she showed on her virgin breast a large wound, still palpitating. He, turning his head, threw down the steel, inclined his eyes, and embraced her in his arms, moved anew to grief by this ancient event. The general pity of the crowd, seeming to sympathize with this sorrowful act, vented itself in exclamations of grief. But, amongst all, issued forth the voice of Marcus Brutus, who exclaimed:—

"O gallant Virginius, how much more illustrious would have been thy deed, hadst thou immediately plunged into thine own breast that steel, still reeking with thy daughter's chaste and innocent blood."

He replied:—"To survive her was a greater act of valour. I received in my arms this beautiful and beloved virgin, my daughter, in the agonies of death, pierced, too, by me, for so dreadful a cause. I ought to have expired from anguish; but virtue supported me, to achieve a mighty vengeance. To me, who every day encountered death in the field in defence of Rome, —to me, signalized by so many glorious scars, assuredly it was not grievous to lay down a life now rendered hateful by the loss of her. I remained to

respire the contaminated air,—to endure the fatal light of heaven. I overcame my horror of life,—I restrained my desperation. I stood upon this execrable earth, the implacable avenger of my injury and of yours. Then I, the Tribune, restored the city,—I annihilated tyranny, and was the second founder of your liberty."

Then Tullius, kindly interposing between them, said:—"As in bodily ailments, it is more difficult to cure those who suffer a relapse, so Virginius, thy enterprise was more difficult than that of Junius Brutus. Thy Rome having a second time relapsed into slavery, appeared weary or unworthy of a better condition. But thou, O Marcus, in that wert incomparable!—that at a time when every spark of liberty was extinguished in every breast, still its fire blazed in thine own. And as thou didst disdain to live a slave, so thou blamest this valiant destroyer of his own daughter, because he did not adopt the same mode of death. But thou didst leave a country become obscure for ever, whilst he remained in it, raised up again to fresh splendour:—he lived to complete the effects of his illustrious deed,—to confirm an useful vengeance, and to die happy in

fully established liberty. Ah! then, do not contend, ye exalted minds, because, equal in virtue, ye differed in opinion, for no other reason but because the conditions of each were unlike."

Marcus Brutus, with his ancient friendship, turning towards Tullius, said:—"Thou makest me feel anew the calm of these reasonings, which, during our lifetimes, used often to moderate our cares. Our minds then wandered in the sea of human opinions. Without feelings of anger were our differences,—without arrogance our opinions. Our judgments moderate,—our words courteous. Oh! only real happiness, to converse in tranquil repose with intellects which promote harmony amongst exalted sentiments."

So saying, he extended his arms to Tullius, who, in his turn, stretched forth his own. But as two clouds driven by opposite currents of wind are confounded together, so these images were mingled in affectionate embraces.

My mind, in the meantime, was fixed upon those two celebrated females, Lucretia and Virginia, both the occasion, at two several times, of the acquisition of Roman liberty.

I considered that that people, which had endured, with incredible patience, first the oppressions of its kings, and afterwards of its cruel decemvirs, had yet shown itself unable to bear violence when offered to the weaker sex,—any outrages offered to which appeared to excite in their breasts a degree of fury bordering on desperation.

Massacres, treacheries, atrocities, or indeed any other species of horror, seemed to be supported by them with a disgraceful degree of baseness, approaching to the stupidity of the beasts of the field.

Only in the cause of afflicted women was there excited a formidable feeling of common vengeance. Then drawing a comparison in my own mind of these two cases, I considered that the one was celebrated of herself by her voluntary death, while the other had left that fame to her father. The former, however, inferior to the latter in the integrity of her manners, because she yielded in the struggle, whilst the other prevented it. Still Virginia appears but as a dove killed in sacrifice, which not having been consulted, neither sees the blow, nor understands it, except only that

she, pierced by her father's hand, expires in his arms. But Lucretia, by exciting first her friends to vengeance, and then, in their presence, as if by a terrible compact with them, shedding her own blood, in ratification of it, excites us to tender admiration. Because the putting to death an innocent young woman displays always a certain degree of barbarity; and if Virginius wished to attempt some sublime deed, he might have rushed upon Appius himself, seated proudly in his dignity, and have thrown him lifeless from his splendid seat. In which attempt he would probably have succeeded, since he might have adopted the same dissimulation in approaching to him, as he employed in withdrawing from him his daughter. And although, for his surviving her, he had produced probable arguments, nevertheless in that point Lucretia was more magnanimous, since she did not endure to live after that odious calamity; so that she, by the splendour of such a resolution, rendered illustrious the dreadful secrets of that her last night. Yet however glorious an atrocity that of Virginius, the heart palpitates with wonder, mingled with horror, and a voice of pity resounds through

the human breast, which revolts against that savage determination; or, if it should assent to it, still it considers that constancy dreadful, which prevented the father from expiring with agony from having inflicted the wound.

CONFERENCE SECOND.

Cato, the Censor and Tullius dispute whether Learning occasions corrupt Manners.

I REMAINED wrapped up in these thoughts, when my attention was recalled by the ghost of a man of great age, who, advancing with dignity, stopt short on approaching Tullius. His countenance was somewhat ruddy, his eyes azure, his temples bald, his eye-brows thick, his expression severe; with his left-hand he gathered up the skirt of his ample toga, and leaned his chin upon his right.

"Who art thou," demanded Tullius, "and of what dost thou bewail thyself?" He answered:—

"Of two things, the one that I should have persecuted, with vexatious and continued rancour, the fame of the two illustrious brothers, the Sci-

pios, denominated Africanus and Asiaticus, for their mighty exploits in those regions. The other for having with obstinacy recommended in the Senate the destruction of Carthage."

"Ah! well do I know thee," exclaimed Tullius; "Oh! magnanimous Portius Cato!" and then threw open his arms, advancing towards him in a friendly manner. But the other put out his right-hand, as if unwilling to receive the advances of an unknown person, and said, with a deep voice:—

"But who art thou?" Tullius answered:—

"Thy descendant, born more than eight lustres after thy death, but as familiar with thy virtue as if I had been thy contemporary admirer."

Without showing himself mollified by this praise, after standing mute for a while, Cato thus broke forth:—

"O Rome, what have I not done! I, by removing from thee thy African rival, deprived thee of an object the most useful to thy valour."

"Comfort thyself," said Tullius, "O magnanimous Censor; for after that destruction, although more cruel than generous, our dominion was extended, far and wide, with incredible pro-

sperity. The despots of the East trembled on their richly jewelled thrones. Africa, her former arrogance for ever humiliated, remained our province. Our legions arrived on the shores of the Western Ocean, which alone opposed limits to become the boundaries of their victories." The Censor seemed to muse, and then asked him,—

"But with those successes at which thou appearest so rejoiced, were there not also introduced within these walls the usages and learning of foreign nations; or did ye still maintain the simple habits left by Romulus?" The other answered:—

"We adopted both the virtues and the vices of the vanquished; but still our empire became more terrible and glorious. Asia, it is true, with her costly luxuries, moderated that extreme frugality, so much praised by our ancestors; but the wondrous arts and learning of the Greeks mitigated the ancient austerity of our manners. Then we beheld, adorned by the prodigies of the Greek pencil, the splendid abodes of our triumphant Generals, and the forums, streets, and temples, filled with heroic images and costly representations of our wonderful exploits. Then our minds,

which had been at first indifferent as to the cultivation of literature, became desirous to attain it. Then the lofty philosophy of the Greeks, their eloquence, and all the charms of the Athenian muses, were brought hither, as being the most generous conquest. Thus, a people who seemed destined to excel all others, with justice, would not lie under the disgrace of being inferior in learning to those they had vanquished."

"Then," said Portius, "thou tellest me that the effeminate corruptions of Asia, and the refined subtleties of Grecian speculations, proved no impediment to the triumphant progress of our warlike successes. And I affirm to thee that which I did not see with my mortal eyes, but which I foresaw by my powers of reasoning, namely, that possibly the empire might go on increasing, but assuredly that the stock of public virtue diminished; hence ye might have fought in distant provinces as victors, but no longer as freemen."

At that opinion Tullius declined his eyes, somewhat in token of unwilling assent; and the other added:—

"Nevertheless, I still applaud myself for having expelled Carneades, and his train of cavillers,

from out city. They, calling themselves lovers of wisdom, rendered it obscure with pernicious subtleties. Equally ready to defend or oppose truth or falsehood, in their mouths eloquence was become prostituted. Hence I am certain, that when that fallacious learning struck root amongst you, which, disputing audaciously of things human and divine, agitates them like the waters of the sea, then was extinguished in your minds all love of virtue, and then only remained amongst you the love of self. Because submission to the laws,—contempt of death,—the desire of becoming illustrious in reputation,—the love of justice,—temperance in civil life, and friendship in private life, are the important results of ancient and wise institutions. But the withdrawing the mind from that beautiful severity to sensual delights, and to the pride of intellect, is the work of a short time, and no great exertion. Then men become inclined to live effeminately, are averse to the restraint of the laws, and ready to launch out into every pleasing excess that may be offered to them. Then the artifices of the muses, and the leisure of meditation, seduce the mind from warfare to pleasure, from the forum to

silence, from public to private life, and render men useless to their native country. Immersed in these intoxicating dreams, the ardent love of liberty is chilled; and having become slaves, they draw their swords contentedly at the mere beck of any tyrant; and when then collected together in the field, like herds of cattle, the only fruit of their victories is increasing the number of their companions in slavery. Now I am certain that all this happened to you."

He ceased; and, not without anger, Tullius answered:—

"Well thou showest what thou wert in life, the enemy of philosophical learning, attributing to it those pernicious effects, which, with it, did not arise from it, but from the blind fury of civil discord. And, assuredly, it would be a dismal fate, attendant on noble doctrines, that they should become a hateful possession, and a vile artifice; and that a great and victorious people might not also be at the same time learned in the sciences, and addicted to the muses. The Egyptians, whose remote origin is concealed in the darkness of time, were celebrated as the precursors and instructors of other na-

tions, in the contemplation of the heavens, the investigation of the earth, and excellence in the arts. Their vast domination endured upwards of twenty centuries; nor probably would the scythe of time alone have levelled those proud moles, in which are laid their humble emblems of death. Before our own days, the Etruscans were a most powerful nation, famous in every art and discipline. The ancient Persians were venerated on account of the wisdom of their Magi. The kingdom of the Syrians was extensive, flourishing, and of long duration, although they were addicted to the lighter studies, especially under the benignant sceptre of that Antiochus, not from terror, but admiration, denominated the Great, as he, in fact, was. Such also was the kingdom of Pontus, upon the throne of which sat that Mithridates, so wondrous in every science, that Nature appeared to have imparted to him the empire over them all.

"But if thou, as averse to monarchs and their subjects, prize not these examples, deduced from tyrannies, turn thy thoughts towards the East, and behold the adventurous, supple, and formidable Greece, mother of precious doctrines. Their

statues, paintings, monuments, eloquence, poetry,—all did not abate in them their contempt of death, nor their warm love of liberty."

"Since," interrupted Portius, "thou speakest to me of the Grecian Republics, I remind thee, that amongst these only one was lasting, namely, the sober, austere, and adamantine Sparta. From her were banished all sterile speculations,—all seductive eloquence,—all the deceitful enticements of rewards,—all that sort of learning which has a tendency to soften the mind, by introducing corruptions. She, ferocious, but great, left to Athens the stylet, the pencil, and the chisel, and brandished the sword. Then Athens, in spite of its famous laws of Solon, called the Sage, fell in a short space of time under the tyranny of Pisistratus. And, on the contrary, Sparta, which had jealously guarded its austere simplicity, Sparta alone, amidst all nations, endured for more than seven centuries, constant in the observance of her laws and usages. Even eloquence was with them divested of all ornament, sparing in words, rich in thoughts, grave, naked, victorious. Thus spoke those who made their deeds, not their sayings, their study."

He ceased, then turned himself round, and disappeared, as if such arguing was disagreeable to him. I then considered how Tullius, who, by the powers of his eloquence in the rostrum, and his talents as an author, had not amongst the Romans, or possibly amongst mankind, any superior, was now so fastidiously listened to by that severe progenitor, to whom he was unknown. Hence, he showed some degree of sorrow at such a discourteous departure: But Pomponius, with soothing speech, kindly said:—

"Art thou grieved because he impeached the love of thy dearest studies? But thou mayst recollect that even Plato, whose volumes thou wert wont to open with more delight, and more frequently than any others, considering his eloquence as almost divine, yet that Plato, as thou knowest, exiled the godlike Homer from his imaginary city." Tullius answered with vivacity:—

"And yet Plato himself would not have lived willingly in it; because, if he had not himself tasted, as from a pure fountain, the plaintive language of that poet, he never would have possessed that grandeur of style, that dignified sub-

plicity, and that store of delights, by which even his at times inexplicable sentences captivate the mind with a delicious pleasure. Still he was pleased to imagine and depict a city of perfection, although no people in the world have as yet attempted to imitate it. And this, perhaps, has been a lucky event, because the fame of so great a writer would probably have been compromised, and exposed to the taunts of the vulgar."

Marcus Brutus, who had till then listened in silence to the discourse, as if not displeased with philosophical discussions, sprung suddenly towards a ghost, exclaiming:—

"Oh Portia! consort more of my exalted mind than of my body, what was thy fate after that I had fallen with Rome?" She answered:—

"Couldst thou possibly believe that I could remain on earth the widow of the last of the Romans? I descended into the shades, to be with thee, even here, thy wife. Ah, vain hope! After eighteen centuries of fatiguing wandering in these immense abysses, behold, at length, I again find thee."

So saying, they mingled in embraces. Then Brutus took her left arm, and placed it under his right. She, with sweet affection, tempered with a matron-like gravity, turned towards him her countenance, resplendent with majestic beauty. At the same time, they seemed anxiously to talk over an infinitude of new ideas. The multitude stood mute, in admiration of that delightful instance of the assemblage of every virtue.

CONFERENCE THIRD.

Pompey and Cæsar dispute with their ancient Rancour; but the latter, conquered by the Reasonings of the former, is at length silenced.—The Triumvirs appear; amongst whom Marc Antony is still the Slave of Cleopatra.

As when, in the heavens, some marvellous phenomenon appears, the timid multitude murmur in contemplating it; so the assembled ghosts, all at once, began to break forth into a confused whispering. All eyes were turned upon a haughty Spectre who presented himself, with a slow step; and Tullius, turning himself towards Pomponius, who stood by his side, said:—

"This man alone, provided fate had not been so much opposed to him, might have preserved

to us our liberties. Mithridates, who had in his vast empire twenty-two languages, the only King who was an object of our fear, an implacable enemy after thirty years' warfare, was, by this man's victories, driven to the extreme regions of the East, and forced to plunge into his own body that sword, which he had vainly brandished against the Roman people. This is he who, in the course of three moons, cleared the sea of pirates;—who fought against twenty-two Monarchs,—overcame more than two millions of warriors,—captured eight hundred and forty-six ships, and one thousand five hundred and thirty-eight cities,—subjugated all the nations which lie between the Palus Mæotis and the Red Sea: and yet, when the defence of his native country was entrusted to him, avoided the aspect of Cæsar; and at Pharsalia, fighting, for the best of causes, the worst of his battles, appeared overcome by the fate of Rome. But instead of falling along with it on that day, the last for all true Quirites, he threw himself into the arms of royalty, confirming, by his fatal example, how deservedly it had been so much detested by us. Because, being basely betrayed by it, he fell up-

on an inhospitable sand, a wretched spectacle of the instability of fortune."

At this speech the Dictator broke forth:—

"If he, although denominated Great, and although he had a greater army at Pharsalia, was conquered by me, let him not complain of fate, but of my valour. Am I not he who have subjugated eight hundred cities, and three hundred nations, have combated upwards of fifty days against fully three millions of armed men, and, if it be permitted to boast of carnage, have sent down to these regions by the sword a million of spectres?"

Pompey all this time listened in silence to these fierce words. His aspect was melancholy, and somewhat resembling that of Alexander of Macedon. All remained reverently expecting that he would approach, except the Dictator, who went towards him. He then halted, and there remained a small interval between them. They eyed each other mutually in a martial attitude, in remembrance of their ancient rivalry. They were mute, as if no words were equal to express their thoughts. Their eyes glared, their brows were knitted, and both placed their right hands on the

hilts of their swords. Pompey appeared to be slowly unsheathing his; when just then there interposed between them a female ghost in a long white robe. She with both her hands threw back on her shoulders the veil which covered her face, and displayed her illustrious features. They were full of sorrow, but beautiful, and excited strongly to pity. Tears of anguish dropt like dew-drops on her breast. She then, with affectionate gesture, placed her delicate hand upon Pompey's, and said:—

"Alas! has not death yet extinguished in thee civil discord!"

Pompey turned towards her, and appeared instantly calmed by the sound of her voice. Cæsar withdrew himself a little, and stood as if in admiration of the female shade. She then sunk upon the breast of Pompey, and, clasping with her soft arms his martial shoulders, sadly sighed. Her long and golden tresses waved over her white neck. Still Pompey, with downcast looks and sighing, supported her as if from pity, whilst I thought I beheld a few tears stream down from those eyes which had so often looked calmly upon slaughter. Several amongst the surrounding

shades covered their faces with their mantles, as if to conceal their rising grief. But the lady lifting her disconsolate face, and at the same time shaking back her tresses, with gentle accents said:—

"O wretched and high-minded consort! I myself beheld thee upon the same day, on which a few years before thou hadst here triumphed over Mithridates, disembark upon the shore of Egypt, and there meet thy death. Wherefore didst thou again return to the barbarous Lybia, infamous for its treacheries?"

Pompey answered:—"Every land, every shore was less deceitful and inhospitable to the Romans than their own soil, since fortune had crowned the vices of that man."

So saying, he pointed towards the Dictator, and regarded him sternly. The other, with a disdainful smile, said:—

"O thou valiant in speech! and a fugitive at Pharsalia. Wherefore, if thou wished to survive thy glory, didst thou not confide in me, always fierce towards the proud, but merciful towards those who were suppliants?"

Pompey disdainfully exclaimed:—"My glory

I hope still lives amongst the good, because I was terrible only to the enemies of Rome, but towards her always submissive. But thine, wherever it sounds, will be an ungrateful rumour, because thy victories overwhelmed thy country in mourning, and the bloodshed of which thou exultest was that of the Roman people."

"I am still grieved," replied the other, "to have shed it, but such was the sad necessity of fortune. Thou knowest not that when victorious, and near to Alexandria, there was brought to me a fatal token of thy death,—I even wept."

Pompey was moved, and exclaimed:—"But what was that token?"—And Cæsar added:—"Thy head and thy ring!"

At these tidings grief seemed to darken the countenance of Pompey, who was silent-struck with wonder. Then indignantly sighing:—"I know not," said he, "whether thy tears were caused by sorrow or by joy. Let me only ask thee, whether the cruel offerer of my head received from thee condign punishment?" Cæsar let fall his eye-lids, and was mute.

And the other added:—"Yet my assassins were in thy power, since they gladly brought to

thee that gift, as a victim to the avenging Deity."

Cæsar, hearing these questions, seemed to shrink within himself, and his wonted boldness vanished from his countenance. For which reason Pompey, with a bitter smile, concluded:—

"Haughty commiseration was that towards an enemy no longer acting on the offensive;—to drop some few tears, such as are shed at the representation of a tragedy. Thus hast thou always demonstrated, by thy hypocritical virtue, the real wickedness of thy mind; whence despoiled of its odious aspect, it was praised, and what is worse, it was successful. Whence, by means of these acts, conciliating the applauses of the mob, after having committed rapine, thou wert munificent—after thy debauchery, temperate—after thy atrocities, benignant. So that, if, in order to lord it over mankind, it were necessary to cover vice with the mask of virtue, no one ever was so deserving as thee of a crown."

The Dictator inclined his face towards a tomb, and tacitly appeared to shrink from this contest. I then mentally considered with myself, that here he had been as much vanquished by the voice of

Pompey, as the other had been before by his arms at Pharsalia; and my mind remained in doubt as to the conclusion to be formed on these terrible adventures. Because, who can say what might have been the goodness of Pompey ultimately, if he had come forth victorious from that strife?

But Cornelia then extended her hand to her consort, and kindly said:—"Be appeased, O valiant leader! Behold that hostile shade can no longer resist the imperious voice of truth. Whilst he was involved in his frail covering, he outraged justice with intrepid front; but here he is sensible of its authority, and submits to it with trembling."

Then Marcus Brutus, coming forward, revealed to Pompey his conspiracy, as daring in execution as it was fatal in effect. Then, to comfort him, proceeded to narrate how he himself, having met in Asia the fugitive offerer of his head, and having put him to death with torments, had in some measure quenched in that wretch's blood his insatiable thirst of vengeance.

"O Rome!" in conclusion he exclaimed, "which lost thy best citizen, when he was the most necessary to thee. Assuredly, my constan-

cy was extraordinary, since I did not despair of the safety of the state, although bereft of thy powerful assistance. We call thee Great freely; but not like trembling vassals, who attempt by means of flattery to moderate the ferocity of a tyrant."

"O Marcus!" the other exclaimed, "well do I know thee by thy high-minded opinions."

Then he gazed with gladness on the slayer of his pernicious rival, and smiled somewhat at the tidings of that event, Instantly, however, some signs of sorrow again clouded his visage, and, turning to Cornelia, he said:—

"Oh! lady, still I feel some human affections, although escaped from the prison of clay! I would, therefore, wish to know what happened to my corse, when it was mutilated on the unfaithful shore."

She answered:—"After the Dictator had made a show of his hypocritical grief at the sight of thy gory head, he caused it to be burned with Oriental balsams, and deposited the ashes in the temple of avenging justice. Thy headless trunk remained upon the bloody sand exposed to the curiosity of the crowd. But when they had sa-

tiated themselves with beholding it, thy freedman Philip washed it in the sea, and covered it with his tunic. Having no other materials to form a funeral pile, he collected together the planks of a shipwrecked vessel which had been left neglected on the shore. He afterwards covered with that unhallowed earth thy ashes. Obsequies rendered illustrious by the sincere piety of that slave, but vile as compared with thy immortal fame."

He stood some time in thoughtful silence, and then said:—"The winds must long since have dispersed that handful of dust, and confused its atoms in the lap of the elements. The sea must long since have overwhelmed the humble tomb. Nevertheless, the place where it stood may be still pointed out to navigators. Behold the end of all human solicitudes. Man appears upon this earth like the fleeting shadow of a dream. Centuries pass over his superb tombs, and scatter them to the winds. The fame of illustrious deeds alone can triumph over the tyranny of time. If that of mine is still heard amongst mortals, lightly do I deem of the injurious contempt shown to my bones." I, struck by that sentence, was near com-

forting the mighty Pompey, by evidencing to him that he was still celebrated amongst us, and that his name was immortal."

But, as the Spectres were occupied in conversing together, and did not remark my presence, I restrained my words, and continued reverently to listen.

All remained suspended in silence, for Pompey looked around him with authoritative aspect, as if accustomed to the command of armies, nor addressed to any one in particular his speech. Then, as if in soliloquy with himself, he exclaimed:—"But to thee, Rome! what happened?" His accents were sorrowful, as if he dreaded an unfavourable answer.

Then Tullius, approaching him, said:—"Cæsar, dispatched by the most worthy at the foot of thy statue, sprinkled it with his blood. But Octavian, his nephew, heir not only of the riches acquired by rapine, but of his tyranny, so far exceeded him therein, that he made us lament his death. That youth, of a ferocious nature, had, before his bloody thoughts, Cæsar betrayed, because loyal; and Sylla honoured, because an exterminator. At the same time, that Antony,

against whom, as if in vain, I launched the shafts of my eloquence, persecuted the liberators of his native country, and by his artifices succeeded in getting them proclaimed Parricides. To this accursed pair was added Lepidus, a man, as you knew him, not worthy of being distinguished from the multitude.

"They divided the empire into three parts, like wild beasts dividing their still panting prey. Imitating Sylla in their proscriptions, they surpassed him both in their extent and atrocity, being three butchers instead of one. Stimulated by ferocious emulation, they seemed mutually to contend which should be the greatest slaughterer. Never did our ancestors strive so much to signalize themselves by enterprises of glory, as did that knot of tyrants to cover themselves with ignominy, and to riot in the blood of Rome. To describe each singly is impossible. As to myself, the daggers of their assassins preserved me from being a witness to that horrid traffic in human heads."

Pompey, on hearing these frightful accusations, displayed a mixed expression of admiration and revenge. His stature appeared to me to assume

a greater size,—he exalted his chin, dilated his chest, whilst his eyes sparkled fire; but his wrath was like that of a warrior's, and his deportment sorrowful. Still I observed Tullius was disturbed, as when the thunderbolt is about to burst, and he reclined his pale cheek on his right hand. I then turned my eyes towards that party in expectation of fresh wonders. I beheld distinctly three ghosts which moved slowly towards us. One of these, somewhat in advance of the others, who had a large forehead, an aquiline nose, and a thick beard, exclaimed:—

"We heard!—we heard what thou hast so unjustly been saying of us! O Tullius! even here underground is that voice of thine fated to be troublesome to me?"

And Tullius answered:—"Eternal ought to be the vituperation of wicked actions! O effeminate Marc Antony! voluptuous tyrant, wherefore wert thou not at least single, and wherefore art thou not now? Thy inclination was benevolent, even amidst the corruptions of life. Lofty-minded, although an oppressor, valiant in the field, liberal in disposition, forgetful of injuries, prompt in offices of courtesy, thou wert, amidst so much ini-

quity, a tyrant who might have been tolerated. But he who advances along with thee, the hypocritical and atrocious Octavian, why doth he still disturb us here with his odious aspect? And that Lepidus, too, devoid of virtue, yet incapable of illustrious vices, we here again behold with contempt. It is not to be endured, that such a man, scarcely fit to serve, should be an arbiter of the destinies of Rome, and should take his seat in that ferocious assemblage, whose decrees filled the earth with blood, and the tombs with skeletons."

Lepidus disappeared at that invective, fully confirming the opinion of his baseness. But Octavian regarded Tullius with a menacing silence. Marc Antony was in the act of speaking. His disturbed eyes,—his compressed lips, indicated the agitation of his thoughts, and the nature of the speech he was about to utter:—When there appeared a female shade, which laid both her hands upon his shoulder, and then abandoned her cheek to his lips. Marc Antony endeavoured to comfort her,—and she groaned as if shocked by some painful recollections. Then she displayed her face, although yet full of beau-

ty and grace. Her complexion was rather dark. Her large eyes, wonderful for their softness, as she moved them gently and expressively around, seemed full of the sentiment of pity. Her dark line of eyebrow arched them over with a graceful curve. Her full and florid lips remained half closed, as if disposed to give utterance to a witchery of soft words. Ask me not what were her robes and ornaments, for upon that face, as if by some enchantment, all my attention was rivetted. Antonius twined his left arm round her alabaster neck, and with his right hand collecting together her veil, with soothing attention wiped away the tears from her eyes. Then his lips seemed to move, as if in whispers; but although there was a profound silence, not a syllable could I hear. Immediately, however, I observed that Cicero, Pompey, Brutus, and Pomponius, and all the other surrounding apparitions of note, after a brief show of pity, displayed in their countenances indignation at the effeminacy of Marc Antony; and, amongst the rest, Octavian evinced a malicious smile. I therefore conjectured, that this must be that bewitching queen so much beloved by the Triumvir,—that the glory of his name

had been in a degree tarnished,—and his history has since descended to posterity as a perpetual example of the fatal power of love. Marc Antony, although her slave, possessed a great and haughty mind; therefore, indignant at that ironical behaviour, he turned round to Octavian, and hastily said:—

"O cruel soul! which never wert yet disturbed by the empire of the affections!—when thou wert in the flesh, assuredly thou hast never felt the delightful sentiment of pity. It is, therefore, in perfect harmony with thy character, that thou shouldst now deride me, overpowered with delicious feelings."

The lady, at that moment, groaned upon his shoulder, and tried with her veil to interrupt her sobbings. Upon which Antony (his feelings of anger overcome by those of compassion) sorrowfully exclaimed:—

"Alas! fatal day, on which I, expiring in thy beauteous arms, beheld the last tears upon these eyes, the arbiters of my thoughts! These lovely hands tore off thy diadem,—dishevelled thy tresses,—beat thy bursting bosom, delirious, yet still most beautiful amidst all the excesses of thy

despair. Methinks I am even now in that Egyptian tomb, embracing thee in all the agonies of death, with thy balmy lips still kissing, and thy veil still wiping my gushing wounds, whilst, with thy melting accents, thou calledst me thy friend, thy lover, thy consort! Hearing which thrilling sounds, my swooning soul departed from my lifeless corse, and was borne hither, in perpetual anxiety about thy fate. But now that I have learnt from thee, how, to avoid following the triumphal car of that oppressor, thou didst lay down thy life, I the more glory in having loved thee."

Then Cleopatra lifted up her enchanting countenance, no longer clouded with sorrow, and, turning towards Octavian with all the dignity of royalty, haughtily exclaimed:—

"I held thy uncle under the subjection of these my eyes—thy uncle the Dictator. I beheld that formidable warrior dwindle before me into a supplicating lover. Yet I loved him not: but caressed him like a wild beast, only to mitigate his ferocity; through which artful blandishments, I induced him, who never felt for his own country, to show pity to me and mine. I,

by means of my beauty and talents, lorded it over the proud Romans as triumphantly as they themselves did over the rest of mankind with their glorious wickedness. Many years I divided the empire of Africa and of Asia with this thy valorous competitor; and beheld the kings of those dreaded regions humbled before me. This, in my mind, was the most sublime effect of transcendant beauty, to overcome such a general as this was, and to withstand thy all-powerful dominion. Vain, therefore, is now thy attempt to disparage her, who banished sleep from thy eyes for many a night, and overwhelmed thy haughty mind with anxious cares. On the contrary, when I had ascertained perfectly the royal manners of this high-minded Antony,—his ingenuous mind,—his loyal heart,—his promptness to pardon and to beneficence,—I for the first and only time sincerely and truly loved."

While she thus spoke, she affectionately clasped his right hand, which still acknowledged the empire of those fatal charms.

CONFERENCE FOURTH.

Antony and Octavian mutually accuse each other of Cruelty.—Cato and Cæsar dispute respecting the Occurrences at Utica.—Brutus and Pomponius interpose to reconcile them.

OCTAVIAN, hitherto a silent spectator, now broke forth:—

"Still, according to thy ancient habit, even here,—ever mistress of soft tears, dost thou presume to deceive our minds, although now set free from the illusions of the senses. Listen to the crowned courtezan, with what delicate and alluring periods she discourses of love. Dost thou dare here to dispute with such artifice,—thou who didst put to death thy brother Ptolemy and thy sister Arsinöe, that thou mightst have no rival near thy throne?"

Upon these words the countenance of Marc Antony was lighted up, and his lips quivered, like those of a lion about to roar. Then, with angry voice, he exclaimed:—

"O, atrocious monster! how dost thou dare to blame another for that vice in which thou thyself wert unrivalled?—cruelty! Art thou not he, who, when still a youth, during thy bloody Consulship, tore out from their sockets the eyes of Quintus Gallius, the Prætor, when, taking offence at his presence, thou wert seized with a sudden frenzy?"

Octavian answered, with suppressed rage:—"Art thou not a Triumvir, and a more cruel promoter of proscriptions than either Lepidus or myself? Hast thou forgotten that I disputed with thee for two whole days, in order to preserve the life of that great orator Marcus Tullius, who had several times saved our country by his divine eloquence? All these Roman spirits well know, that the odium of that enormity fell upon thee, who, as a necessary preliminary, and indispensable condition of all concord between us, stipulated for the death of that illustrious man. And how great thy anxiety was to procure it is well known, from

thy delight when thou regaledst thy cruel eyes with the sight of his bloody corse. Atrocious derisions,—abominable insults,—barbarous exultations, were the tokens with which thou receivedst his head and gory hands. With what cruel complacency didst thou not gaze upon that right hand, as it hung up, which had wielded the stylet in nocturnal vigils against thy infamous practices?—and where? Even as it hung upon that rostrum where his celestial eloquence had triumphed. But expect not, O wretch! that by means of these outrages the fame of the virtue of Tullius, or the infamy of thy vices, have been diminished: No. In vain, with thy own hand, intoxicated with joy, didst thou crown that Popilius, who, when accused of fratricide, was saved by the eloquence of Tullius, and then afterwards becoming his assassin, brought to thee his dead body. Equally will ye both be for ever execrated.

"But thy wife, Fulvia, worthy of such a consort, may alone contend with thee the glory of that murder; who, rivalling thee in such fierce delirium, placed in her lap the head, ridiculed and

reviled it; then pulling out the tongue, pierced it with the silver bodkin from her hair."

Whilst thus Octavian declaimed, Tullius endured with modesty the dreadful tale. Many ghosts commiserating such an unmerited death, turned their eyes woefully upon him. He ceased; then Marc Antony exclaimed:—

"Seeing that we were both implicated as accomplices in these transactions, we cannot contend which of us is innocent, but only which was the least cruel. Still methinks I am sitting in that conference of death in the island of the Rhine, I hear the rushing of the current around its shore, whilst we talked in low whispers, lest the surrounding legions should hear the resolves of our council of blood. Still, however, it grieves me that I extinguished that flaming brand of our eloquence. No tongue except his own is equal to his mighty praise. I was hurried on to that vengeance by the incredible annoyance of his declamations, which wounded me still more than thy arms. His words entering like darts into my heart, persecuted my power, and confounded my ambition. Still, if odious crimes can admit of defence, I would say that Tullius suffered from

me, the victor, that injury which I should have suffered from him had I been conquered by him. And that such were his intentions appeared not only from his speeches, dropping gall, and breathing hostility, pronounced both before the Senate and people, but also from the way in which he constantly instigated Brutus to put to death my brother, whom he had made prisoner. To which ungenerous vengeance Brutus demurred, till he should see Tullius. But when he (Brutus) received the tidings of his death, having then my brother disarmed, and in his power, in chains, and no longer to be dreaded, he hastened to propitiate the ghost of his friend, by punishing him for another's fault, without affording thereby any useful example, but only gratifying Plebeian ferocity."

At this narrative Tullius wrapt himself up in his cloak, and showed by his countenance a feeling of sorrow.

"It grieves me," said he to Brutus, "that thy friendship for me should have prevailed over the love of our country, and that thence thou shouldst have refused to public vengeance what thou yielded to private. And yet that Caius (as well

as his brother) had been declared by the Senate the enemy of Rome, and, therefore, to put him to death was a sacred and public duty, as a measure of defence. To me thou sacrificedst that victim, which was only due to the public safety."

Brutus answered severely and composedly :—

" Certain it is that the destruction of those who are fatal to their country is an illustrious undertaking, as well as delightful to a free mind, and sincere heart: Therefore, I grieve that Marc Antony should have been spared upon the auspicious day of the Ides of March. Because, with the Dictator fell the trunk of the tyranny, but, in Marc Antony, the root remained, which grew up again into a more haughty plant. Still the death of Caius was not a private but a public satisfaction, O Tullius, always moderate in thy opinions. For on that day when our country lost thee, it was left fatherless ; therefore, I, one of its true sons, was bound to satisfy it by a prompt vengeance. I gave that which time and present opportunity permitted; I would have given a greater, if fortune had been just."

Then, turning round to the Triumvirs, who looked at him fiercely, he boldly added :—

" No longer contend, ye two tyrants, which of you was the most atrocious; for of this ye may be assured, that, in ferocity, ye were unequalled, except by yourselves. For which reason, it becomes thee not to vaunt, O Octavian, of having defended Tullius for two days. On the third, thou abandonedst him, O mild Prætor, of inestimable life. Hadst thou but known the value of that life, thou wouldst only have yielded it at the expence of thy own. But, suddenly, the fatal secret of that concord was made manifest; for, on the third day, each of you having secured the gratification of his own cruel wishes, Marc Antony yielded thee up the head of Lucius, his maternal uncle; Lepidus that of Paulus, his own brother, in exchange for that of Tullius, finally conceded by thee. With a stylet dipt in blood, ye wrote the horrid contract of traffic in lives the most sacred. Then, in confirmation of that alliance of wickedness, thou mayst recollect, Octavian, that Marc Antony promised thee in marriage his daughter, Clodia. Finally, with pious rites, ye invoked the gods, by swearing to keep faith towards each other, in a compact hateful to Heaven; and, with such ceremonies as were only befitting for

the celebration of the salvation of your country, ye three butchers celebrated the massacre of the good, and the funeral rites of Rome."

Brutus ceased, and Octavian taking him by the hand, answered:—

"Men, when they stand in need of clemency, are humble and suppliant; afterwards, when they have obtained it, they are rancorous and treacherous. We, therefore, saw those become the assassins of Cæsar, who, when vanquished by his valour, had been preserved by his benignity. His betrayers were those whom he had embraced as friends, and liberally rewarded with illustrious offices. Therefore, it behoved us to employ a necessary rigour against the men, who had been proclaimed enemies of their country; because experience had instructed us, that an extreme perversity of nature was not to be overcome by any kindness. Instead, therefore, of waiting for the effects of any one's cruel hypocrisy, the display of another instance of cruelty and treachery, we determined to prevent it by prudence."

At such a tyrannical commencement Brutus withdrew his hand, and, as if in disgust, shrunk

back. But Octavian smiled, and turning himself towards Cæsar, added:—

"Thou wert, Dictator, Pontifex Maximus, the triumpher over nations, the most hostile to Rome: Thou, first amongst us, had attempted to explore the ocean, and had made known to the Romans islands hitherto undiscovered; nevertheless, thou wert put to death by traitors, who were indebted to thee for their lives, and who were even inscribed by thee in thy last will and testament; and where? In full Senate, in a sacred asylum, in the presence of the people, and of the gods, with savage joy, full three-and-twenty times pierced by daggers. Then, if any vengeance may appease thee, be it known to thee, that in Macedonia I overthrew in battle thy betrayers, who had collected together a vile rabble, like themselves. I preserved the head of Brutus, and destined it to be laid at the feet of thy statue in Rome; but the ship which transported it was wrecked, and the sea robbed me of the trophy of that triumph. But thou didst not remain defrauded of fit objects to appease thy manes, whilst I lived as thy avenger. Upwards of three hundred prisoners I caused to be put to death at

thy altar, on the sad anniversary of the Ides of March."

"Alas!" exclaimed Cæsar, "and how canst thou rejoice at having shed the blood of Roman citizens, instead of that of bullocks? Thou art well aware, that during my life I was grieved when I conquered my Romans. What a hateful tribute, therefore, didst thou offer to my ashes, which, however, could not be raised up again by such a barbarous ceremony."

Pompey listened with anxiety to this discourse, because he learned thereby the events which occurred after his decease,—the fate of Rome,—the unlooked for accidents, and the fatal consequences of human disorders. No answer was given by Octavian to the severe reproof of the Dictator, as if in these abysses he still reverenced his uncle.

At that moment, there arose in the midst of them a ghost of grave aspect, clothed in a toga. He appeared to be of that time of life which is declining towards, but has not yet fallen into old age. His locks were rather hoary and thick upon his severe forehead, his look commanding, his eye-brows shaggy. He extended his right

hand towards the Dictator's breast, in the act of pushing him away from him, and, with indignant grief, exclaimed :—

" What, then, do I here again encounter thee, thou odious tyrant ? nor to avoid thee did it suffice, that I lacerated with my own hands my palpitating entrails ?"

He answered with becoming gentleness :—

" O severe Portius, thou didst envy me the glory of having been able to save thee, and I envy the magnanimity of thy death."

The other added :—" A life which is the gift of a tyrant is not less vile than loathsome. Wherever thou borest sway, freedom was only to be found in death."

The other said :—" Be appeased, thou fiery soul, for I, in all sincerity, was grieved at thy death."

Cato, with irony, exclaimed :—" O ingenuous grief, then wert thou vexed at beholding, stretched in death, the contemner and enemy of thy flattering vices."

The other replied :—" I pardoned thy followers ; nor was there any other blood shed except his own, the most worthy to have been preserved.

Thy son, who committed his fate to my clemency, remained free and uninjured. Such was that victory, obtained without bloodshed, and celebrated by pardon."

Then Cato, drawing himself back with horror at that speech, said :—" Listen to that audacity, wonderful in others, but so customary with tyrants, to exult over oppressions, and to call their outrages clemency. But where art thou whom I ought no longer to call my son? Where art thou, O coward! indebted for an infamous life to the abominable benignity of this wretch?"

The voice of the enraged father resounded through the recesses of the cave, unanswered, except by the repercussion of the echoes; and much the multitude semed to respect the paternal grief of so illustrious a citizen. But after he had several times in vain invoked the shade of his son :—

" It is well," said he, " that such a coward should not dare to show himself in Rome to the Romans. O slave, in evil hour begotten by me, remain for ever wandering through the murky deserts of death."

Then, turning to the Dictator, he abruptly

added:—"Through what fatal destiny art thou here? And how can the Quirites, vile even in death, endure thy presence?"

The Dictator answered with that pride which befitted his exalted fortune:—"Oh misfortune, that we have not here our bodies and arms, that thou mightst now in combat satisfy thy obstinate rage."

Whilst he thus spoke, he placed himself in a hostile attitude. His eye became fierce, his front menacing, his eye-brows so terrific, that I was struck with awe. On the other hand, Cato groped around him in human guise for his arms, and not finding them, remained sad and perplexed.

"O terrible effects of civil discords! Time has destroyed not only the empire of the Romans, but their innumerable posterity; and yet their ancient animosity still rages with all its pristine and ferocious fury in these hostile shades."

But Brutus interposed between them, and extending his arms, spoke in this guise:—

"Peace, O illustrious ghosts! your feuds make, as ye perceive, the Romans sorrowful. It is not worthy of you to recommence here that strife,

which being now unattended with peril, must remain without fame."

The Dictator restrained himself at these words, and calmly answered:—

"O, my son, thou well knowest how capable I could be of resisting thee; because, after thou hadst stabbed me, I abandoned myself to thee."

Cato, then, overwhelmed with astonishment, exclaimed:—

"Oh unhoped for vengeance! Brutus, ah, speak, for had I hoped for such an event, I should have remained alive to be thy accomplice. At length I am appeased, and thou art the most fortunate of Romans."

Then Brutus related to his austere father-in-law that transaction,—in hearing which he seemed wonderfully pacified. Brutus, however, like an ingenuous and loyal spirit, did not omit to manifest the incomparable clemency of the Dictator,—his inviolable faith,—and the generous modesty with which he invariably moderated his tyranny, so that it was rather insidious than violent,—adducing even the instance of himself, who, although his implacable enemy, obtained from him not only pardon, but the prætorship of

Cisalpine Gaul; and concluded that he had been doubly conquered—both in arms and in liberality. Then Pomponius took a part in their discourse; and at some length entered into the necessity of a perpetual Dictatorship,—and how no one had ever been more moderate than Cæsar was in the possession of such extensive power. After they had concluded their narratives, Cato, who had listened with grave attention, said to Brutus:—

"Certainly I expected that the consort of my daughter would execute some enterprise worthy of my blood."

Then turning himself to the Dictator, added:—"Thou diedst, an eternal example that power obtained by usurpation is neither rendered secure by the favour of fortune,—nor by conquest,—nor by the vileness of the subjugated,—nor by the virtue of the oppressor; but that only possesses stability which is loved because it is just. I do not extol thy clemency, because it was only a degree of moderation in wickedness. Therefore I concede to thee only this degree of applause, that there never was a worse citizen than thee, nor a better tyrant."

CONFERENCE FIFTH.

Horatius and Pollio dispute respecting the Character of Octavian; and then they and Marc Antony contend as to which of them was the more cruel.

During this discourse, Octavian remained silent, as being already acquainted with all these transactions; but at length I beheld him smile, and receive with kindness a spectre which approached. It was somewhat plump in person, of middle stature, with a jovial sort of physiognomy, and eyes which seemed not friendly to sadness. It seemed to bring in its aspect a variety of pleasing fancies, such as might prove comfortable and consoling to the mental anxieties of the great. When it had come nearly up to Octavian, it pointed to Octavian with its finger, and addressing itself to the multitude, spake as follows:—

"Although he (Octavian) seized upon the supreme authority by means of severity, yet no one was more sage, none more wonderful nor merciful, after having obtained it. So that, whoever was placed under his benign authority, might consider himself as having taken refuge in harbour secure from all republican storms. And truly he who was not contented with that delightful repose, after such a succession of disasters, either did not know the felicity of these times, or was undeserving of it."

At these words there sallied forth from the crowd, hastily spreading out his arms, and dilating his ample breast, a tall and melancholy spectre, but venerable from his age, and exclaimed:—

"O thou fugitive from the fields of Philippi, thou poet of the tyrant, thou Venusinian flatterer. I, if no other will here speak with freedom, I will speak like a Roman."

"O Asinius Pollio," then interrupted Horatius, "what now avails thy haughty contempt of thy betters? Art thou not he who, having abandoned to its fate thy hopeless country, withdrew to the peaceful retreats of Tusculum, and there spent in study and contemplation the last

years of thy octogenarian life? For as even thyself didst deem our inveterate corruptions quite incurable; what else could a true citizen ask from heaven excepting a sage moderator of such bloody excesses? Octavian, therefore, was as well deserving of the gratitude of Rome, as the first Brutus, the founder of its liberties. For it is an enterprise not more arduous to found a free city, than to restrain in after times its anarchy. But whoever existed at that period must know, that Augustus united the empire of one, with the honourable liberty of all, so that Romans, no longer subjected to the audacity of the plebeians, nor to the oppressions of the rich, were free without licentiousness, and obedient without dread. Under which mild government, the clouds were dispersed which had for such a length of time obscured the horizon, and we laid down at length those arms, which had, during so many consulships, been embrued only with the blood of ourselves; so that our minds having recovered from their delirium, returned once more to the cultivation of learning. Rome, which had always been the terror of nations, and latterly even of itself, then became a peaceful abode to its own inhabit-

ants, and to foreigners. And if, in former times, even its own citizens had fled from it, now the inhabitants of remote cities flocked to it. I do not mean to remind you of the magnificence of those edifices with which Octavian so adorned our native country, that it seemed a retreat fitter for the Deities than for mortals; because a city may be very splendid, and its inhabitants notwithstanding very wretched. I only would recal to your recollection that degree of happiness, which none of you can deny was enjoyed at the waving of that victorious hand, which wielded so benignantly the sceptre of the world. By means of pardon, he put down conspiracies; and by his goodness mitigated that ferocity so rooted in your breasts by a succession of atrocious events. Thence every one, as if awakened from a cruel intoxication of blood, felt ashamed of his past excesses. Yet whoever will consider, without passion, the manner in which Augustus conducted his wonderful government, must be sensible that it was such as scarcely ever existed, being absolute as regarded himself, but only exercised for the common blessing of all."

Whilst thus the Venusinian, whose golden

stylet had traced such immortal verses, was so complacently pouring his praises in honour of his august master, Asinius, sneering bitterly, shook his head. He then broke forth:—

"No new artifice is that of tyrants, who, after having ascended to a throne by the sanguinary track of wickedness, put on the appearance of meekness and virtue, that they may induce men the more readily to bend their necks to their yoke, and fancy themselves fortunate. Then why should thou vaunt, O Flaccus, the benignity of that man, after all occasion of suspicion had been destroyed, because he had put to death all the best by his barbarous proscriptions? But in the same manner, wild beasts, after being satiated with blood, repose themselves quietly in their caves. But who would not have become gentle, when, having vented all his rage, no one remained to molest him, who, having become pre-eminently powerful and tremendous, was enabled to despise alike the envy and outrages of fortune? Surely no man whose mind was not under the influence of madness, when he attained such a height that the arrows of vengeance could no longer reach him, would have entertained the

wish of injuring others. But if thou wouldst really know the natural disposition of that man whose bounty thou hast so bepraised, call to mind the means by which he obtained that diadem, around which thou continually pouredst forth such lofty and harmonious flatteries. For if thou wouldst assemble together all the wickedness with which human nature can be contaminated, turn thy thoughts to the Triumvirate; for in that accursed period thou didst live. Even that night of blood and desolation preceding the cruel edict of the proscriptions, is of itself sufficient to cover his meretricious gentleness with eternal odium. Well is it known to thee that his satellites, like famished tigers, prowled forth at midnight to track the lives that had been sold to them. These streets resounded with imprecations and menaces, with the shrieks and lamentations of despair. Not an eyelid was closed in sleep, all were kept awake by feelings of horror and desperation. At length, when, by the first blush of the morning's light, the fatal edict affixed to the rostrums was rendered legible, then at least they knew to whom it was granted to live.

"The pale crowd spelt over by the dubious light that list of three hundred Senators and two thousand Knights, whose lives were there sold at the price of one hundred thousand sesterces each. What although the other two Triumvirs placed, one his own brother, and the other his uncle, yet even in that sort of atrocity thy own Augustus was not behind them, for he included Caius Toranius, who had been his tutor. The gates of the city were guarded; closed was every avenue for flight, either by sea or by land, throughout the whole extent of Italy. Then were to be seen in every province those heads dripping with gore, which were subsequently brought to the rostrums in the Forum, and there redeemed at the promised reward. These, but lately illustrious, fled in squalid disguises, searching for some dark cavity in the earth in which they might hide themselves, whilst others crept on silently and trembling over the roofs of houses in search of some lurking place. Others, formerly perhaps noted for their riches and dignities, stole away to implore pity and commiseration at the feet of their own slaves. And whilst the ferocious and greedy multitude were running to and fro in search of the proscrib-

ed, the better and wiser class remained in mute astonishment at witnessing such a horrid outrage of all reason and justice. Some fell assailed by assassins, whilst others of their own accord presented their throats to the knife, abhorring longer to endure a loathsome life in such a ruined country. Some by starvation, others by means of a noose, some by throwing themselves headlong from the roofs, or into the water, or into the flames, prevented their impending fates, and avoided the horrible sight of their pursuers. Neither were those only murdered who had been inscribed upon the fatal roll, but many others also, either from revenge or from error, whose bodies were distinguished by the circumstance that they were left unmutilated. But who can describe the extraordinary and wonderful occurrences attending that dreadful massacre! One man, while reclining on his couch at supper with his family, was seized by his hair, and beheaded by the assassins, while his trunk remained at the table, and the surrounding guests stood around speechless and petrified with horror. Every natural tie being dissolved, rapine and vengeance stalked abroad at will, and sons and consorts, even the betrayers

and informers, the former not only obtained for their reward their paternal possessions, but even dignities and honours, while the latter celebrated at the same time the funeral obsequies of their betrayed, and the nuptials of their new consort. Some who had been proscribed for the sake of their riches only, first scattered them amongst the people, then, having set fire to their houses, consumed themselves in the flames. Several sought refuge on the ocean, and there had the misfortune to perish on the billows. Neither forum nor senate-house, nor palace nor temple, were longer any asylum. Nay, not even the arms of their mothers, because many of these, from the dread of incurring punishment, chased from their laps their own proscribed sons, as if execrable and fatal. But thou, who abandonedst thy shield in the fields of Macedon, art well aware what was the clemency of that lord of thine after that last day of Roman liberty, which he gained not by his own prowess, but by the victorious arm of Marc Antony. Octavian was desirous to be pre-eminent in cruelty towards the vanquished. The most illustrious of them appealed to his pity, but it was a virtue which had never existed in his

breast. On the contrary, he gave immediate orders to massacre them, and quietly contemplated it with savage delight, greeting their dying groans with the most bitter sarcasms, and reviling and abusing them in their agonies. There were some amongst them who, as a last dying request, implored him to let their bodies have sepulture; to which he ferociously answered:

'THE VULTURES SHALL BE YOUR TOMB.'

These barbarous words had scarcely issued from his lips, when he beheld prostrate at his feet a father and his son, who implored him to save their lives. He gave orders that they should cast dice, on which cruel jest, these suppliants becoming at once magnanimous, the father abandoned himself to his pursuers, and the son seizing up a sword fell upon it. The cruel conqueror looked on in savage joy at these events, so dreadful even to narrate. When afterwards fortune had exalted him to the supreme command, although extolled perpetually as clement and sage, and mild and bountiful, both by thyself, by the magnificent Agrippa, and the noble Virgil, the voluptuous Ovid, and the powerful Mæcenas; nevertheless, as in a tamed tiger its natural ferocity is easily

excited, so he speedily displayed his masked, but still unvanquished natural ferocity of disposition. Thence was deservedly applauded that well known saying of Mæcenas, who beholding him, on a certain day in the Comitia, more than usually thirsting after blood, and then disposed to condemn several to death, not being able to approach him through the crowd, traced on his tablets these two illustrious words :—'ARISE, BUTCHER,' and threw them at him."

Hitherto Octavian had listened with remarkable tranquillity to these animadversions, but then interrupted him by saying,—"And I, immediately rising from my seat without any indignation, went away. Consider whether any other man, who had been exalted either by virtue or fortune to the supreme power, would ever have permitted such a counsel, or been so prompt to adopt it. To such a degree did my generous disposition render me deserving of that sincere friendship which is denied to those in power, I was venerated without fear, praised from affection, and beloved though wielding a formidable sceptre. I fought my way, it is true, to the throne by a track of blood. But so lofty a pro-

ject never has been, nor possibly will be accomplished, by adhering to the usual bounds of common justice. For great enterprises are never unattended by extraordinary and dreadful vicissitudes." Marcus Brutus, astonished by these opinions, lifted up his thoughtful countenance, fixed his stern eyes upon Octavian, and exclaimed:—

"Now, indeed, I am assured, that Rome was condemned by fate to inevitable slavery, since, as a punishment for my exalted enterprise, she had reserved a much worse tyrant." Then, turning his back, and muttering with indignation, he melted into air. His words hung in suspense on the lips of Octavian.

But Pollio exclaimed:—"O free and gallant Brutus! remain here, and confound with thy presence these two tyrants." So saying, he pointed imperiously to Marc Antony and Octavian; but the spectre was already engulfed in the ocean of death.

Marc Antony somewhat indignantly said:—"Ah! wherefore, thou wretched being, doest thou here disturb this Avernus with thy tedious inculpations! Assuredly, upon upper earth thou wouldst have been worse than either of us, if

thou hadst possessed power, seeing thou still aboundest with arrogance and presumption! For had I been but as cruel as was befitting my exalted fortune, Octavian never would have deluded my fidelity, through which I was always dauntless in the field, and unsuspicious in the Comitia. For had it belonged to any after the terrible Sylla, the great Pompey, and the generous Dictator, to moderate the overturned republic, I was that person, as being unrivalled amongst the Generals of my day."

Octavian answered:—"No one is here present who is ignorant of thy abilities in war; neither is there any one who does not recollect thy vices during peace. Never was there a better captain, nor a worse citizen. Negligent, effeminate, dissolute in private life, temperate, magnanimous, intrepid in the midst of war. Therefore, in proportion as thou wert well adapted to acquire supreme dominion, so wert thou unfit to maintain it."

"Well doest thou speak," exclaimed Marc Antony, "to him who gained the victory of Philippi! The Romans beheld upon that day

which of us two was most worthy of governing them."

Octavian replied, not without a malicious sneer: —"They likewise beheld which of us was most deserving at the battle of Actium." At these words Marc Antony hung his head, so that his locks fell and shaded it, as if luckily to conceal his sudden blush. I beheld in that moment the magnanimous warrior, under the impulse of a noble feeling, abandon the delicate hand of his lady, and withdraw himself a little way from her. But she, well skilled in all the arts of blandishment, with soft accents soon approached him. It was then still more manifest, that the Triumvir was condemned for ever to love her, for he, softly approaching, gave proof amongst the dead of the sad force of his passion.

Then Octavian proceeded:—"It would have been, assuredly, O Quirites! a marvellous proof of your docility, if such a man, devoid of all dignity of conduct, should have governed you, who had not even any restraint over himself. You may remember, when my illustrious uncle, fighting in Iberia to extend your domination, left the government of Italy to him. Never yet was any

actor seen more impudent, for he, being put in possession of that dignity, proceeded in state through that province in a chariot drawn by tame lions, followed by his actress Cethereda in a litter. And when the Dictator, after the victory of Pharsalia, was following up his successes, he still reposed so much confidence in Marc Antony, that he confided to him the government of Rome. Ye then beheld him surrounded by actors and buffoons, overcome with debauch, reeling in drunkenness through these triumphal streets, at the same time unsheathing his naked sword, and attended by a train of satellites ripe for plunder, with whom, like a robber in a forest, he filled the city with terror and lamentation.

"Even in his proscriptions he was distinguished by a capricious avidity, which induced him to inscribe therein the name of Nonnius, because he was possessed of an Opal which he coveted; and also of Verres, because he had refused to give him some Corinthian vases."

"Oh, miserable country!" exclaimed Tullius, "in which he, who, from his wicked actions, deserved to die a death of ignominy, yet perished in a way becoming an innocent person. Thus,

then, O cruel Verres! did these thy vases prove still more fatal to thee than all my declamations!"

Then Octavian turned towards the illustrious orator, and with modest demeanour said:—"If a tardy repentance is here of any avail in diminishing in thee the resentment of past injuries, know, O exalted genius! that no other action still gives me more sincere grief, than that I should have yielded thy life to that man."

Tullius then gravely answered:—"And I repent me of no other error so much as of my simplicity in having put any trust in thy flatteries. For I was a grey-headed Consul, well versed in the transactions of the Republic, and experienced in human affairs. Well aware also of their vices, and distrustful of virtue; nevertheless, I was so much ensnared by thee, a youthful dissembler, that I reposed in thee the hopes, not only of myself, but of all other good men. We looked to thee as to a Pharos, when we were enveloped in the tempest, until at length, betrayed by thy deceitful guidance, we were for ever overwhelmed. But if thou art willing to perform for me any agreeable office, in place of vain excuses for thy

irremediable faults, I pray thee to continue thy reprehensions of him, whom I, in my lifetime, attacked with words unavailing, amidst such a state of corruption, but true, free, and illustrious."

Octavian seemed sorrowful, because Tullius had not accepted his excuses. Nevertheless, stimulated by his ancient emulation against Marc Antony, he proceeded:—

"Scarcely hadst thou obtained the victory in the fields of Philippi, when thou showedst thyself unworthy of it, by that disgraceful licentiousness which rendered thee contemptible even to the vanquished. Because, while the Monarchs of the East fell at thy feet like supplicants, thou appointedst to collect the tributes of four cities of Asia Anexanor, the flute-player, who, taking up arms, made them desolate by his insatiable extortions. These supplied to thee (ever covetous of the possessions of others, and prodigal of thy own) the means with which thou maintainedst the splendour of thy vices. But if he obtained so large a reward, who administered delight to thy ears, no less fortunate was a cook, who, at a supper, so gratified thy intemperance, that he re-

ceived from thee in reward the possessions of a rich citizen of Magnesia. Then having collected riches by rapine, thou didst afterwards dissipate them in riotous feasting and debauchery, so that, in whatever city thou enteredst, the groans of the oppressed were heard intermingled with the fatal exultation of the victors. Intoxicated by which, both in Tarsus and Alexandria, and Athens also, under the disguise of Bacchus, thou vilely sufferedst thyself to be called a God, when thou no longer meritedst even the name of a man."

"Hear, O Romans!" then exclaimed Marc Antony, "in what a spirit he now talks, who, when governor of so many nations, was perturbed by the visions of dreams, and timidly consulted fortune-telling impostors, governed his immense empire by a vain confidence in lucky and unlucky days, and at length, as haughty as Jove, and so denominated by the flattering mob, yet was wont to descend trembling into the lowest recesses of his splendid palace, whenever the thunders shook the atmosphere."

"Miserable Quirites!" then exclaimed Tullius, "behold to what tyrants ye were abandoned

by cruel fortune, who now discovering in your presence in barbarous disputation their several vices, appear much more worthy of having been gladiators in your amphitheatres, than arbiters of your destinies, and of those of so vast a portion of the earth."

While he pronounced these words, some tears dropt from his eye-lids, and grief was depicted on his cheeks. But that sorrow was grave and composed, and not at variance with his dignity. Marc Antony in the mean time retired, and his seductive Queen along with him. The wind playing amongst the waving fillets, veils, and tresses of the Queen, mingled them confusedly with the royal mantle, which Marc Antony bore upon his lofty shoulders. Octavian, indignant and confused at the severe reproaches of Tullius, disappeared amongst the crowd, taking with him Horatius, and a train of his flatterers, such as Agrippa and Mæcenas, and the rest of those who, in admiration of his greatness, forgot by what improper means he had exalted himself.

I, desirous of ascertaining their features dubiously known to me by means of ancient monu-

ments, wished to interrogate my guide, the friendly Tullius. But just as this request was upon my lips, there arose amongst the multitude an unexpected tumult.

CONFERENCE SIXTH.

The Parricide.

As the calmness of the sea is on a sudden converted into a tempest, so the disturbed spectres dispersed as in waves, amidst the tombs, and the heaps of bones, and the dewy foot-paths. The air trembled with a variety of confused and piteous sighs, which, united, formed one single and most dismal acclamation.

There came forth from the furthermost cavity of the caves a Spectre, who appeared, by stretching forth his arms, to implore general pity. But that was denied to him, just as if his very presence was execrable. Some threw the skirt of their robes over their heads, others covered their eyes with both their hands, others declined their heads and eye-lids, and all tried to avoid him,

by a general flight. Even the earth shook, and the tombs trembled; the bones within them rustled with a dry sound, and the hollow blasts of wind howled, as if the forerunners of some coming prodigy. The place remained deserted, and that Spectre alone advanced, who had put all the others to flight. His aspect was youthful, and sorrowful beyond measure,—his eyes breathed terror,—his face was obscured by mortal anguish,—his hair was dishevelled, and stood on end,—his cheeks scalded with tears,—his lips black and parched,—his whole person squalid, and miserably revolting. He seemed extremely desirous of approaching the flying crowd, and, with groans, endeavoured to arrest them. Alas! dreadful sight, which ought to have excited commiseration. Still not a single ghost remained, and a sorrowful stillness at length enveloped these resorts of the dead. I, abandoned by Tullius, as in a frightful desert, in the presence of a monster, felt my accustomed courage expire within me. Those so valiant Spectres had all fled, and it, therefore, seemed a sort of audacious obstinacy, that I, still the subject of death, should dare to face a Spectre whom they

had all shrunk from. By which sentiments held in suspense, I remained, without turning round, with my eyes intently fixed upon that Spectre, which kept approaching me faster than I retreated from it. It still kept its glaring eyes fixed stedfastly, as if it contemplated in me some marvellous object. I beheld, when it came near me, that its hands were dropping blood, which, although it constantly endeavoured to wipe off with its clothes, still issued forth as if from a fountain. Its breast was begirt with an angry serpent, which, with its venomous tongue, kept stinging its heart. This was visible, by an extensive wound produced by its continual bites, in which its frequent throbbings were apparent. It approached slowly, because its feet were shackled with chains, which sounded with a dreadful clank as they were dragged along the ground. I turned away in horror my trembling steps; not because I feared any violence, but through repugnance at such an atrocious spectacle; and, it being now close to me, said, with a languid voice:—

"Remain, O kind descendant, and have pity on me, who am suffering inexpressible agony."

I stood still at these sorrowful words, as ever

ready to render any office of human friendship. He, as soon as he observed that the sentiment of pity prevailed in this piteous manner, proceeded :—

"Well am I aware that thou art generous amongst mortals, since thou endurest my presence, and, being such, it is meet that thou shouldst be inclined to compassionate the misfortunes of another. Deign, then, to have pity on me, and learn how deplorable is my destiny! Behold, I wander in the deserts of death, impelled by the anguish of desperation. I implore pity without ceasing; but amidst this silent darkness, all my exclamations of sorrow are dissipated in vain. A burning sting pierces me through, and agitates me with a perpetual delirium of torments. If, perchance, amidst this ocean of silence, I encounter some spirit, I address to it the most humble supplications, that it would stop, and listen to me. But they all fly inexorable from me, without any answer, and leave me in this immense peregrination. Oh how ineffable is my misery, to be thus for ever prohibited from narrating, in tears, my misfortunes to any one

who might, by possibility, feel pity at hearing them !"

My mind was alike distracted by feelings of terror and of pity. His appearance struck me with horror,—his tale with grief. Just, then, as I was about to address him in a strain of consolation, and while my very words yet trembled on my lips, I observed that his hair appeared in motion, and I heard the horrid hissing of angry reptiles. O disgusting sight ! I then remarked that amongst his locks snakes were entwined, which, rooted in his head, retorted themselves, and, with bites, endeavoured to escape. Urged by agony to despair, he often raised both hands to rid himself of their insufferable torture ; but the slippery reptiles, gliding swiftly between his fingers, eluded all his efforts. Ever and anon, he tried vehemently to pluck from his heart the horrid snake which fed upon it ; but there, too, he was baffled, because it also still returned with renovated vigour to the attack.

Whilst I stood gazing mute with horror at the contemplation of this dread punishment, the spirit continued to regard me with eyes filled with tears, and with his fingers all be-

grimed with the bloody slime of the serpents, attempted, by signs, to make me comprehend the full extent of his sufferings, uttering at the same time the most piteous moans. Overwhelmed with compassion, I was at length scarce enabled to say, what shocking punishment is this under which thou art suffering, O most miserable of departed spirits? He, sighing, deeply answered:—

"Compassionate mortal! it is quite impossible for thee, even in fancy, to form an idea of my present misery; but know that it resembles that I endured at the time of my death. For ever thus in the agonies of death, still I exist amidst such tortures as would seem more than sufficient to destroy me. Longing for annihilation, I bewail this my immortality, which retains me in a state of perpetual suffering. One strong convulsion terminates all the bodily suffering endured by mortals; but this my intellectual frame is for ever sensible of anguish,—ever capable of an infinity of pain."

"Alas! for what reason," I then demanded, "art thou placed in so horrible a state?" And the spirit groaning, thus commenced:—

"Behold, at length, after the tardy lapse of so many centuries, it is granted to me to give vent to my eternal grief, by narrating my tale to one, who, even although he should feel no pity for myself, must yet compassionate my sad punishment.

"O thou, father, who wert the kind supporter of my infancy, and cherisher of my youth, of what poor avail were all thy tender cares and friendly admonitions! I, who was distinguished amongst all the young men of my day, was likewise hailed as being fortunate in possessing such a sire! Like a mariner, yet inexperienced in the perils of the ocean of life, I looked towards him continually, as to some friendly constellation which was to be my guide during the voyage. His affection for me was tempered with dignity, and mine for him with reverence. But on attaining to that age when puerile amusements cease to please,—when the heart first experiences that emotion, which, rendering it dissatisfied with itself, teaches it that some comfort is awanting, although still ignorant of its nature; I then beheld a certain maiden, whose soft and melting looks made a deep and permanent impression on

my mind. She was sitting along with other females, beholding the festive games of Ceres, but amongst them all she seemed to bloom forth like a young rose, just expanding to the breath of spring.

" O thou pernicious impulse of love, how powerful are thy effects upon the human mind! Whoever commends himself to thee, as being the sweetest tie and most delightful in civil society, is assuredly undone. For, in fact, thy sad consequences constrain a man to endure evils much worse than those appertaining to a savage state.

" Hence, as soon as the subtle poison had entered my breast, I, from that moment, sickening, became only anxious to contemplate the object which was the tyrant of all my thoughts. Assisted by the artifices of love, I procured ere long an interview, in which I tasted all the delights of her society. The damsel was gifted with surpassing beauty, had a graceful figure, melting voice, and most insinuating conversation. Her bright eyes twinkled like stars that were become the arbiters of my destiny; her lips seemed to govern my heart. Impelled by thirst, I approached the fountain, and drank at it even

to intoxication. O insatiable delirium! O fatal delight! soon the smile of joy disappeared from my lips, and my countenance was overclouded with sorrow and care. But the damsel herself, more beloved than loving, aware of her own power and my weakness, maintained her influence by means of such a delicious tyranny, as, while it irritated my wishes, rendered her still more the mistress of all my sentiments. For she, by turns, by the attractions of her lively discourse, or by her languishing eyes, or affectionate endearments,—at other times by bashful timidity, or retreating coyness, relaxed or tightened at her will the reins which held me in slavery.

"Too late, indeed, did I become aware of the nature of such artifices, which at the time appeared to me to be only the delicate struggles of sincere good will. But so great a passion could only be recompensed finally by that, whereby all passions are extinguished, I mean by marriage. To this end, I requested the consent of my father; but he, inexorable to my entreaties, and deaf to all the prayers of my fatal love, refused to grant it. Nor satisfied with that alone, he communicated to me the fatal sentence, that I

must gird up my effeminate breast in a cuirass, and repair to Sicily, which was then the theatre of our warlike enterprises. Rendered effeminate by my passion, and impelled by indolence, I refused to do that which no Roman ever declined—to fight in the field. For the flame of glory had been extinguished in my breast, and its place occupied by the soft lustre of two lovely eyes.

"This cowardice on my part excited my father to utter the most tremendous imprecations; and, in his anger, to lament that he had ever been instrumental in giving existence to a being like me, so unworthy of such a country, and so unworthy of such a parent. But that, too, proving insufficient to cure me of my disgraceful passion, he attempted to undeceive me, by revealing to me the deceitful artifices of the damsel,—her bygone history,—her doubtful fame, and servile condition. But my bewildered intellect, instead of approving these wise and true exhortations, abhorred them as impertinence. Thence I, doubly a prey of misery, first, because I was excluded from the nuptial bed; and, secondly, that I was driven to take up arms in a spot remote from the object of my desires, felt finally awakened in my breast a degree of perver-

sity which hitherto I had never known. The fury of my atrocious thoughts overturned my intellect, brought on a frightful delirium; the flame of rage pervaded my members, and all my senses were obscured by a sanguinary purpose; the tumult of care, and the stings of ferocious insanity especially attacked me during the silence of night. Alas! during one of these most execrable of all nights, I awoke in a state of raging madness, and turned my trembling steps towards my father's bed-chamber. This infamous right hand of mine grasped a dagger, which, in hardness, was at least equalled by my obdurate heart; although every fibre was convulsed with the idea of the enormity, yet my delirium impelled me to give vent to my accursed thirst of vengeance. I approached in madness to the door of the bed-chamber, and although I opened it with caution, yet the hinges somewhat creaked. O would that that noise had prevented the crime! My father lay by the unhappy woman who gave me birth, both immersed in the oblivion of sleep. The night had already passed the middle of its course; silence reigned in the streets; only some peals of thunder faintly murmured

in the distance. By groping only without the aid of my eyes, I made out the spot occupied by my father. Now my knee leant upon the edge of the bed, and my right hand hung down. Behold even yet I weep as I narrate the horrid tale! I then heard him in his sleep pronounce some confused words, amongst which, however, I distinguished that, groaning, he called upon me by name. I remained gasping, and my tremulous hand was restrained by a sudden impulse of pity. My judgment wavered between my cruel intention and the horrible effect. The latter at length prevailing, with my parricidal dagger I pierced my father's heart. The wretched man, awakened by so dreadful a cause, shook himself, and filled the midnight air with his agonising groans. My mother awakened thereby, and, still in ignorance of the unknown misfortune, invoked the gods, and, with screams, called upon her slaves. As to myself, I, fallen into the abyss of evil, I no longer knew myself, for total darkness had involved my reason. Overcome with the crime, trembling, panting, and quaking with dread, I betook myself to flight. A terrible voice bellowed in my breast, and accused me of my crime;

already I heard the sentence of all Nature, which drove me forth an outcast from her bosom. I already felt that I was become a loathsome abomination on the face of the earth. Sallying out, therefore, from the city, I rushed into the fields, and as no other abode seemed in my mind suited to me, I sought out a forest. Rushing, therefore, into the recesses of that of Tusculum, I wandered about like a monster, uttering savage howls, while floods of tears streamed from my eyes. At first my only aliment was grief; but when at length my body became languid from fasting, I satisfied my cravings by tearing up the moss from the trees. The sun, the frost, the clouds, the waters, and the wind, by turns, spent on me all their rage, as if the ministers of the vengeance of Heaven. The thorns tore first my clothes, and then my flesh. My hair became twisted, and knotted together. If at a fountain, I was impelled to satisfy my thirst, I turned back with horror from the reflection of my own face. The night-time, which to all brings along with it the consolation of sleep, only awakened in my afflicted breast the most dreadful thoughts. Then it was that I beheld threatening spectres gliding

through the darkness. The earth under my feet sounded hollow, as if indignant at supporting such a wretch. But if, at times, oppressed with suffocation, I closed my eyelids within some cave, even then I did not taste sleep, but suffered from dreams full of marvellous disasters, a confused series of atrocities, sorrow, carnage, and blood. Agitated by which, I awoke raving mad, ever uncertain whether sleep or watching was to me the most fatal, and always impelled from one to the other. If the sky lightened, it appeared as if I alone was the object of its destruction. When the thunder resounded through the valleys, I threw myself prostrate on the earth, quite appalled, or, hanging my head, fled trembling into some cavern. Nor were the dread fires of the heavens necessary to intimidate me, for the slightest breeze shaking the leaves seemed to me either a wild beast about to devour me, or the rustling of a snake, or the approach of spies, or the deity of the forest. Quite sufficient were these cares to render my life a burden; but it was the will of heaven that it should be cut short by a still more dreadful punishment. One day, when compelled, by raging thirst, I had quitted

the forest to descend to the river, I was seized upon and conducted before the Prætor. To him I acknowledged my crime, the proofs of which were manifest. I was, according to our custom, shut up in a leathern bag, along with a viper, a mastiff-dog, an ape, and a cock. In which narrow space, and with such executioners, I was cast forth as a sport to the waves of the sea. It is true that my offence was abominable; but not less so was this cruel invention. Deprived of light, and air, and earth, I, floating about, suffered the outrages of the watery elements. These are even formidable to the old experienced mariner, who is exposed to them in his well-built ship. But think what they must have been to me, thus abandoned to their fury, in such a dark vessel, expiring amidst a variety of torments, each more horrid than the other. Naked amongst their talons and bites, to expire in agonies, crawled upon by enraged brutes, and thus to be enclosed along with them in the same tomb. The greedy jaws of the mastiff were fixed in my flesh, the serpent glided over me with his cold scales, and then attacking my throat, twisted himself round, and grasped it so firmly, that I was near-

ly suffocated. I attempted with my hands to prevent this effect; but the enraged reptile then turned himself to my eyes, and with his cruel fangs deprived me of sight,—while, streaming with blood, my eye-balls were soon reverted from their sockets. At that moment the cold chills of death pervaded my body. At length all these cruel executioners, and companions of my punishment, seemed to revenge themselves upon me, for the anguish they were suffering. Vain then became all efforts on my part to defend myself against them, because, if I attempted to detach the greedy jaws of the mastiff, he bit me with the greater force. The cock and the ape, constantly, with their talons and bites, attacked my body, so that the bag was filled with my blood. But the fierce struggles of these animals, and the breaking of the waves, rent asunder my leathern prison. To me it seemed a fortunate event, when I respired the open air:—but I beheld not the face of heaven, for my eye-sight was gone. Even this wretched comfort was of short duration, because, being conquered by the waves, I soon sunk to the bottom of the ocean; and then escaped from my lacerated body this spirit, I know not

whether more odious to others than to my wretched self; but, assuredly, of all, by far the most divested of hope."

While he was relating his sad story, the serpents hissed erect upon his head, while, from his eyes, dropped tears of blood. I, from very pity, felt a cold chill at my heart, while scalding tears coursed adown my cheeks. But he, of a sudden, returned into the eternal way, and disappeared amongst the tombs. I stood enveloped in darkness, hardly yet conscious whether I yet remained amongst the living. Then, groping my way out towards the usual passage, I beheld the sky, and again respired my vital air. But scarcely had I recovered myself from these tremendous apparitions, when I felt no other anxiety more pressing than that of narrating, in humble style, these discourses, worthy of the most sublime diction. Yet even this my mediocrity can scarcely conceal the haughty pride of these Romans. Here, now, as I pause, to reflect upon the opinions expressed by the Romans themselves as to their own merits, my mind is almost involuntarily brought to this conclusion:—That they were great, rather than good;—illustrious, rather than

happy;—oppressors from the very nature of their institutions;—admirable from their fortune;—by their natural disposition destroyers;—generous in their wickedness;—heroic in their injustice;—magnanimous in their atrocity. From which fatal illusions, their fame yet resounds to so great a degree, that it silences the timid judgment of the multitude, and drowns the voice of the wiser portion of mankind.

As to myself, I have moderated the very exalted opinion that I once entertained of the Roman people; insomuch, that without diminishing in me the admiration of their incredible enterprises, I am yet of opinion that it was for the general repose of mankind that a nation which aspired to the possession of the world, and was constantly disturbing it, should have been at length vanquished by time.

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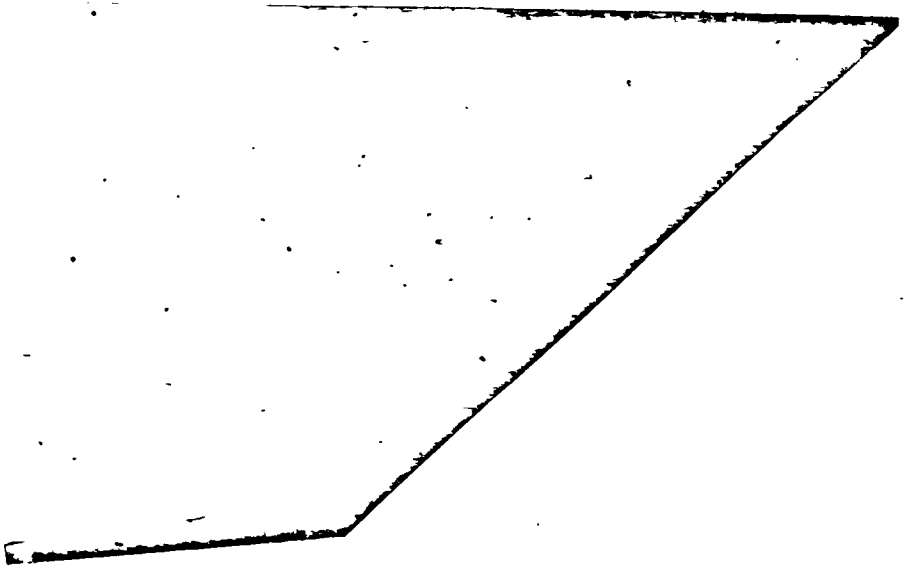

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